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THE
Black Banner;

OR,

THE SIEGE OF CLAGENFURTH.

A ROMANTIC TALE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF *THE BARON DE FALKENHEIM*,
MYSTERY UPON MYSTERY, &c. &c.

Safe from surrounding spears he took his flight,
And all the deathful weapons of the fight;
Alone, unseen, the warrior journey'd on,
Through solitary paths, and ways unknown,
His future course revolving in his mind,
Now here, now there, his doubtful thoughts inclin'd.

TASSO.

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THE
BLACK BANNER.

THE attention of the Count now became rivetted upon the speaker, and he scarcely ventured to breathe, lest he should miss a word of what he was to be told; indeed, his mind was by this time attuned to that pitch, as to be capable of giving credence to what, but a few hours before, he would have ridiculed as the height of superstitious folly. The sibyl perceived the impression he had received, and proceeded:

“ I shall pass over the progress of the Turkish arms, as well as the taking of the city of Bassora, which fell a sacrifice to

your victorious troops ; a conquest so deeply felt by the Persian monarch, that upon receiving the account of it, he shut himself up in his seraglio for several days, without permitting even his most favourite sultanas to have access to him. It was not, however, the loss of the city that so much affected him, as that of Zulima, the destined Countess Von Werdenberg. You well know, Count, the various means he employed to obtain a knowledge of her fate, but in vain ; for although he was himself certain that she was somewhere concealed in the Turkish empire, yet he could by no means ascertain it ; and his embassy respecting her was founded upon the expectation that Achmet would command a search, which he trusted would be effectual. That monarch's sincere regard, however, for you baffled his scheme ; and finding every method useless, he gave himself up to the most desperate despair, and, from the king, became the tyrant of his people.

“ You may perhaps be surprised that
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the loss of a niece, who was the promised bride to the purposed successor of the Persian throne, should be productive of such fury ; but this surprise will cease, when the secret which had so long lain concealed within the Prince's breast was, in a moment of frenzied agony, discovered. Yes, Count, the Sultan loved Zulima—loved her with a desperation that, had not fortune removed her, might have shaken the Persian empire to the centre : the pretended engagement to the heir apparent was a blind practised to conceal his own illicit passion for one so nearly allied to him ; and it was solely to place her from the temptations of a court, that she was removed to the royal, but sequestered palace of Bassora. Neither did the Sultan content himself with ordinary measures to accomplish his discovery : he commanded the high priest of Zoroaster to summon a meeting of his disciples, and declared it to be his royal will and pleasure that they should

use their utmost skill, in order to restore the ravished Princess to her country. Surprised at so unusual a command, our venerable superior presumed to deny the necessity for having recourse to those sacred mysteries, forbidden by their great founder to be used but on the most solemn occasions; and, notwithstanding the cloud which he perceived gathering upon the brow of his sovereign, he dared to vindicate the unerring justice of divine Providence, in having removed, to a far distant climate, one whose fatal beauty would innocently have caused the destruction of thousands.

‘ And of what consequence,’ exclaimed the furious monarch, ‘ are the lives of millions, when put in competition with a prince’s happiness? Instantly obey, or, by Orosmales, I swear your own blood shall smoke upon those altars you vainly fancy a protection from my fury!’

“ With the calmness and serenity of conscious virtue, the high priest bowed his head
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in silence ; but viewing his sovereign with an impressive yet compassionate look, he exclaimed, as he left the apartment, attended by the inferior magi—‘ Such is the effect of passion uncontrolled, which, led on by the hurricane of impatience, dares to gratify its unlicensed fury, though unattainable by any other means than those at which Nature herself shudders.’

“ With these words he left the apartment, while the monarch, hesitating between his meditated vengeance, and the awe with which the superior power of the magi impressed his mind, hastened to bury himself in the interior of the seraglio.

“ In the mean time the sacred temple was prepared for the celebration of those rites which the sovereign had demanded. Eager to obtain the intelligence, that prince determined to be present at the mysterious solemnity—a demand which for ages had never been made, and which could be acceded to in favour of the reigning monarch alone ; not even the next in succession, or

a single attendant, being permitted to enter the interior, where the rites were performed. Seated upon a magnificent throne, prepared for the occasion, he seemed to await the beginning of the ceremony with a gloomy anxiety; his penetrating eyes rolled around the mystic fane, as if in anxious expectation of the appearance of that form which engrossed all his thoughts.

“It was my business to begin the solemn incantation; but scarcely had the first response began, than, with a noise loud as thunder, a rushing wind forced open the massy doors, and the temple, which but a moment before was illuminated with a thousand lamps, became involved in total darkness. All was horror and confusion; the monarch rushed from his throne, and was about to leave the dreadful scene, when, in characters of fire, these words rooted him to the spot: ‘*Desist, presumptuous mortal, or dread the impending vengeance of those beings thou darest to invoke.*’ Like as the stricken deer attempts to fly from
from

from the shaft by which he is wounded, so did the terrified monarch endeavour to escape from his own thoughts. Buried within the inmost recesses of his palace, he brooded over his disappointed hopes; busied thus in reflection, it at last occurred to him, that the scene he had so lately beheld in the temple was fictitious, and raised by the ingenuity of the magi, in order to terrify him from a pursuit which they had before so strongly reprobated.

“ This idea added tenfold fury to his passion; and, careless as to the issue, he ordered his domestic troops to surround the temple of Orosmades, and, by setting it on fire, to involve both priests and their assistants in one promiscuous ruin. For a moment, even the bravest stood aghast; but a more peremptory order, with threats of instant execution, at last compelled them to proceed. All was instant confusion; thousands flew to the protection of their sacred religion, while others joined the impious abettors of the monarch's fury.

Disgusted with the scenes of carnage that everywhere met my view, and indeed, not thinking myself in safety in the capital, I determined to take advantage of the confusion, and undertake my long-meditated enterprize.

“ I well knew that the natives of Germany were addicted to superstition, and that those who, in the smallest degree, understood the science of magic, were looked up to and caressed as supernatural beings. Possessed, therefore, as I was, of such a superior pre-eminence in mystic lore, I had little doubt of succeeding, to the utmost of my wishes, even if, upon examination, I should find my high-spirited relatives unwilling to acknowledge me ; indeed, I little expected that they would take notice of me ; nor was I mistaken, one only out of the numerous class excepted. To the welfare of that one, I vowed my whole life should be subservient ; I mean not individually, but to those also whom he honoured with his esteem.

“ At

“At some future period,” continued the sibyl, addressing the Count and Theodore in a more pointed manner, “you shall be made acquainted with the remainder of circumstances that, for the present, must continue veiled in mystery. One more particular alone, but of the highest importance to the Count Von Werdenberg, am I permitted to reveal: the infant Zulima still lives.”

“Lives!” cried the Count.

Nature could bear no more; and he fell into the arms of Theodore, which had instantly, upon perceiving the effect so sudden a surprise occasioned, been extended to support him. The conflict, however, was soon over; and a few drops of the cordial, carefully administered, restored the suspended animation. Gazing around the gloomy apartment, the Count seemed to expect the appearance of his daughter; but the sibyl, aware of what was passing in his mind, gently recalled his wandering imagination, and by degrees restored him

to tolerable composure. Questions, however, were rapidly multiplied upon questions, all of which were carefully evaded, until at length the half-satisfied father was obliged to desist from further inquiry, as he plainly perceived, that the same reasons which required her removal from his paternal care, prevented her return to it at the present moment. His mind, however, was no longer desponding, but elated with hope; and so wonderfully had his sentiments been changed during this eventful interview, that he had become almost as great a believer in supernatural agency, as he had previously been a despiser of its assertors.

The assurance of his Zulima's safety, which was solemnly repeated to him, together with the promise that the superintending care of the sibyl, as far as her power extended, should be exercised for her protection, until the hour ordained by fate for her restoration, gave new life to the Count; and although he dreaded the dangers

gers by which, he was informed, she was surrounded, still he trusted that the same Providence which had hitherto protected her, would continue its powerful support in every emergency.

Deeply interested in this conversation, the time would have passed unheeded, had not their hostess recalled their attention to their original pursuit.

“ And it will not,” she observed, “ prove a less stimulus to your exertions, by the knowledge, that the fates of the innocent sufferers, Adeline, Matilda, and Zulima, are so intimately connected, that the avenger of either is the avenger of all. I see the generous impatience of the brave Theodore ; would that it was permitted me to disclose the volume of fate, and give ease to hearts already deeply conversant with misfortune ; but though possessed of more than human knowledge and power, still those prerogatives are limited : suffice it to know, that the destiny of those innocent sufferers must be decided by the valour

of Theodore de Mountfort, aided by the experience of Henry Count Von Werdenberg. But it is time to hasten your departure; already are Sternheim and Berthold upon the road. Receive then my final instructions, and with it this mysterious standard—(giving, at the same time, into the hands of Theodore, the large ebony staff before mentioned):—but remember not to attempt the developement of its virtues, until it has produced the destined effect.”

She then proceeded to inform them of the use to be made of it; a ready obedience was promised to her commands, and they left the eventful cottage, with sensations far different to those which they entertained upon their first entrance into it. The gloom which had so long hung upon the brow of the Count, had given place to the rays of hope, though long distant; while an ardour, new and irresistible, darted from the eye of the heroic Theodore. They had also been promised the future assistance

tance of that mysterious being whom they had just parted from ; a promise which cheered their hearts, and enabled them to bear the present evils with greater fortitude.

The issue of the engagement with Albert has been already related ; it remains for us, therefore, only to describe the means which so unexpectedly caused that Prince to relinquish an almost certain victory, and to give up, in a moment, the fruits of a long series of conquest, by yielding to a disgraceful flight.

The Count Von Werdenberg, whose ideas of supernatural powers invested in favoured mortals had undergone a total alteration, insisted upon carrying the standard, committed by the sibyl to their care ; and although this situation was derogatory to his rank as an officer, yet the arguments which he brought forward were so forcible, as obliged Theodore to be silent upon the occasion ; indeed, one, and of the greatest weight, bore down every objection, which was, that the real situation of the Count

was

was known only to those chosen few to whom he had in confidence intrusted it. Peculiarly observant to seize the most favourable moment of displaying the yet unfurled banner, the Count watched most narrowly the passing events; and with that judgment which had so frequently been the theme of admiration, both in friends and enemies, he chose upon this occasion, the critical instant when Albert, who had obtained a temporary advantage, was rushing forward to complete his visionary victory, by the death, or at least the overthrow of Theodore, who had just become visible to him, and was, upon many accounts, particularly obnoxious to him. Ere the rival chiefs could join in hostile defiance, the silk, hitherto restrained by a secret spring, flew open, and displayed its terrific bearing to the surrounding troops. The field was the colour of blood; while, in the centre, a raven, formed to represent life, was seen, pierced with an arrow, and in the act of falling from its aerial height.

Thousands

Thousands gazed, and wondered; the heart of Albert alone was paralyzed with fear; all confidence forsook him, and his imagination fancied himself already in the power of the avenging powers. He fled; the secret cause, however, was known but to few, and those, for the present, choosing to confine their knowledge to their own breasts, the flight of their Prince was attributed to motives the most disgraceful.

As the injured Adeline has been long neglected by us, we must leave the generous conquerors in quiet possession of the city of Clagenfurth, engaged in effacing the memory of that tyranny under which they had so long groaned; and although many discoveries, most important to the principals concerned, were made during the various discussions between the three chiefs, the Chevalier D'Armfeldt, Theodore, and the Count Von Werdenberg, to whom also were joined Berthold and Sternheim, who had, upon the return of their messenger to the monastery, immediately set

set

set forward to the place of rendezvous, we must, for the present, unwillingly pass them over, and revert to the time when the deceived Princess, hopeless of immediate relief, calmly resigned herself to the protection of those selected by Albert to take charge of her at the rendezvous, who were chosen to conduct her to the solitary castle, prepared for her reception, as also to attend upon her there.

The situation of Adeline, travelling through the dreary wilds of an unfrequented forest, in the total power of a man who had proved himself destitute of every feeling, can be better conceived than expressed. Every moment teemed with impending destruction; and it was no little aggravation to her distress, that her chief hopes even depended upon the fidelity of her insidious betrayer to his detested master. At times his scowling eye, darting malignant glances upon his prey, raised in her imagination greater horrors than those threatened by Albert; while again, suddenly recovering his

his self-possession, he would endeavour, by the most plausible arguments, to convince her of the reality of his master's affection, and to reconcile her to the fate which awaited her.

Firm, however, in her own integrity, she rose superior to her terrors, at the same time as she scorned the flattering prospects which her wily attendant poured into her ears; or, if she deigned an answer, it was such as became the dignity of her station, and sufficiently proved the greatness of her mind. And although the hardships which she endured, thus estranged from all society of her own sex, and subject to the caprice and will of her persecutor, were such as called forth all the energies of her mind, to enable her to support them with fortitude, still she nobly resolved to bear the present, and even greater necessities, rather than accept of the proffered friendship of her betrayers. To support life, she esteemed a duty; but to render it more palatable by abject subservience to those
whom

whom she had so lately commanded as their sovereign, was an humiliation which she was determined to resist by every effort in her power. During the remaining part of her journey, therefore, she readily accepted of common necessities; but when more was offered, she indignantly refused them, observing, with marked emphasis, "that it was not for prisoners to revel in luxury."

In this disposition, she at length arrived within view of her destined residence, which was pointed out to her observation by Martuccio, who, with a smile truly demoniacal, congratulated her upon the speedy termination of her journey. A look from the victim of his malice, in which majesty was blended with scorn, was the only reply that the Princess deigned to return. The wily villain felt the superiority; and his downcast eye, though scowling with malignity, told the effect of her silent, but dignified reproof.

The massy pile to which the unfortunate Adeline was approaching belonged to Albert,

bert, and was part of his hereditary patrimony ; but that Prince, having by conquest acquired territories more congenial to his disposition than the dreary solitude of Mittewald Castle, had for some years, even previous to his possession of the principality of Clagenfurth, abandoned it to the dilapidations of time, except only that the few peasants, who were thinly scattered over the adjacent neighbourhood, were sometimes employed in propping up the tottering buttresses. Over these was placed a servant, who had long been in his master's service, and of whose fidelity he had experienced such unequivocal proofs, as to render him perfectly secure under any trust he might impose upon him. This man, together with his family, consisting of his wife Madalen, and his daughter Agnes, resided in the western apartments, which they had contrived to render decently habitable, by confining all the repairs to that spot, instead of applying the annual labour to the general building ; and as Albert had
almost

almost ceased to remember that he was in possession of such property, and the peasants were thereby, in a considerable degree, eased from a duty which the dread of punishment for their neglect solely induced them to undergo, no notice had been taken of this appropriation of the produce. Albert, however, upon his determination of obtaining possession of the person of Adeline, recollected this retired spot, and conceiving it well calculated for his purpose, he instantly sent private orders to his confidential servant, to have such apartments, as he particularly described, got ready upon the occasion; the nature of which he gave sufficient hints of, to be comprehended by one who had been privy to so many of his secret actions.

The Castle itself was situated in the most mountainous part of the Tyrol, and was totally inaccessible, except by one narrow path, cut from the solid rock, and which could be defended by a very small force, against any open attack that might be made
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upon it. It had been a place of very strong defence ; and even then, notwithstanding the ravages of time, joined to the neglect of proper repairs, had considerably weakened its fortifications, it might rank among the most secure places in the country. Such was the spot to which the Princess of Clagenfurth, torn from the enjoyment of every thing that could constitute her earthly happiness, was consigned. True it is, that from its lofty turrets, the wild, yet magnificent aspect of the surrounding country, might have afforded to the inquisitive eye a relaxation from the monotony that reigned within its walls. To enjoy this scenery, however, though grand in the extreme, required a mind whose tone was harmony itself, and to which the desponding feelings of misery were unknown. Could such a spot then give pleasure to Adeline ? on the contrary, each pine-clad mountain, whose verdant tops seemed, while bending beneath the rushing breeze, a moving forest, added, by its majestic grandeur, to the poignant

poignant feelings of her lacerated bosom ; while her fancy, too busy for her peace, painted the glorious scene, as a resemblance of her former fortunes, when seated supereminent upon the throne of power, she smiled graciously upon those beneath her, dispensing around such benefits as her high station enabled her to bestow.

Upon the arrival of the Princess and her attendants at the first barrier, which consisted of a drawbridge thrown across an immense cavity that ran between the mountains, beneath which an impetuous torrent rolled with an irresistible force, a shrill-toned trumpet announced their near approach, which was immediately answered from the interior of the Castle. Some minutes, however, elapsed ere a person, habited as a peasant, was seen winding around the path that led from the ramparts to the exterior defences ; he was attended by two others, who, though clothed in a similar manner, were evidently subservient to the first. This was Roberto, the confidential servant before mentioned, who

who had been long in expectation of their arrival ; indeed he had almost given up all idea of their visit, and thought that his master had either receded from his intention, or that he had been baffled in his project ; the latter he deemed the most probable, as he well knew his perseverance in persisting in any scheme which he had once determined upon ; and that, particularly when a female was concerned, he was too obstinate to relinquish it upon any trivial cause.

Upon receiving the countersign, the drawbridge was let down, and Martuccio, taking the hand of Adeline, was about to lead her over the trembling passage, when a sudden sensation, almost bordering upon suffocation, caused her to stop ; it was, however, but momentary ; she soon regained possession of her resolution, which had so suddenly given way ; as the idea that in one moment her fate would be determined crossed her imagination, and that the next step would probably consign her
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to sufferings, under which reason itself might fail.

It was with the utmost difficulty that the bridge, long in want of repair, could sustain even the slight weight that pressed upon it, and, more than once, the giving way of a rotten plank threatened unavoidable destruction. It seemed, however, as a peculiar interference of Providence, that all passed over safe, except Martuccio himself, who, fearful lest, by any accident, he should lose his prize, which he had waded through such difficulties to secure, (for the sensation of Adeline at the bridge was not unobserved by him, and not being certain of the fidelity of all her attendants, he dreaded an appeal to them) hurried her with such rapidity over the fragile materials, which had become slippery by a shower of rain, that he fell, and having hold of the Princess's hand, dragged her with him. From this peril, which for a moment was imminent, the latter was instantly
liberated

liberated by the attendants, without having experienced the most trifling injury. Neither, at first, did Martuccio appear hurt, until attempting to rise, he found himself incapable of standing; and, upon examination, his right leg was evidently broken. Upon this disaster, the first care of Roberto was to secure the drawbridge. An attendant was then dispatched to the Castle, in order to procure further assistance, who no sooner announced the disaster which had happened, than both Madalen and Agnes hastened to the spot. It was upon this trying occasion that the innate virtues of the Princess Adeline shone most conspicuous. The sense of her own situation seemed buried in oblivion, while she assisted the menials in forming a couch, upon which Martuccio might be conveyed to the Castle with the least pain to himself. Had the hearts of her future guardians been as callous as the rocks which towered around them, they must have yielded their esteem to a being possessed

of such real sensibility ; but fortunately for her future happiness, the inmates of the Castle, though faithful to the interests of their master, were not destitute of those feelings of compassion and kindness, the proudest ornaments of human nature. One instant, however, was here productive of that veneration for her character which time alone could otherwise have established. Her history was well known to Roberto, and had by him been communicated in confidence to Madalen and Agnes. Sensible of the injuries which the Princess had received, it was therefore no wonder that they should consider her attention to the person through whose means she had been betrayed as even beyond the tie of human nature ; or that they could, without astonishment, contemplate the Princess most forward in every endeavour to procure ease and comfort to the suffering invalid, and, careless of her own rest, devote herself to his service. From that moment Roberto tacitly espoused her cause ; and
although

although he resolved to pay obedience where it was due, yet he questioned not but that he should be able, with the assistance of Madalen and Agnes, whose sentiments, he was certain, would coincide with his own, to render her abode more cheerful than she had taught herself to expect. Indeed, his orders had been to treat her with every respect ; still, there were many little attentions, which he doubted not would be agreeable, and in his power to bestow. Upon one subject he was resolved, that although obedience to his master was his firm and willing creed, still, should Albert so far disgrace his manhood, as to attempt a forcible compliance with his wishes, he would protect the suffering victim by every means in his power ; neither did he conceive, but that in so doing, he should, when the first impulse of passion was subsided, be gratefully thanked for his apparent disobedience.

It was with the utmost difficulty that Martuccio was conveyed to the Castle. He

appeared, upon the slightest motion, to undergo the greatest tortures; and for some time life and death seemed floating upon the balance. His ravings became incessant, and, during the extremity of their paroxysms, secrets of the most dreadful nature were disclosed to the astonished ears of the ministering attendants, and the virtuous Adeline. It was peculiarly fortunate for Martuccio that Roberto had, in his younger days, obtained some knowledge in the surgical art, which indeed was frequently the case with those servants who considered themselves more the humble companions of their masters than menials; as, it being their province to accompany them upon all expeditions, their services in that peculiar line were frequently called upon, and at times when no other assistance could possibly be procured. It was by slow degrees that he recovered his senses, and, with them, his former strength. As he approached to convalescence, his deportment became more gloomy;

gloomy; and he was frequently seized with such deep fits of abstraction, as to be totally insensible that he was liable to observation. His not having received any orders from Albert, respecting his future conduct, contributed in no small degree to his inquietude; for, notwithstanding his accident, and prior to the fever having disordered his senses, he had dispatched one of his followers, upon whose prudence he could rely, with a minute account of every transaction, from his first leaving the convent to his arrival at the Castle, not forgetting his own unpleasant situation there, which, he was fearful, might prevent his return to Clagenfurth a much longer time than was prudent in the posture of affairs, as he felt convinced that his presence was necessary in that city. Such was the tenor of his communication to Albert. But Martuccio was little aware, that while he was hazarding his own life in obeying the tyrannical commands of his Prince, his sovereign himself

was suffering even a severer punishment for the crimes which he had committed against injured innocence; for ere the messenger, dispatched by Martuccio, could arrive at the end of his journey, Albert had become a solitary wanderer, banished from his dominions, and deserted even by the very men who had been the partners of his crimes, and had revelled upon his former bounty. Such, alas! is the fortune of those who, when the sun brightens the day of prosperity, find themselves surrounded by the gaudy ephemera of the hour, which, fluttering round the object of their idolatry, seem to adore its splendour, until the distant clouds, darkening the horizon, threaten approaching destruction. Then, as if animated by one impulse, they shrink from the impending ruin, and leave, unpitied, the idol of their former love exposed to all the threatenings of fate, just ready to overwhelm him with the darkness of destruction.

It has been observed, that the ostensible
orders

orders which preceded the arrival of Adeline at the Castle of Mittewald, were of that description which Albert conceived would be most likely to wean her from her sorrows, and at length captivate her senses; in consequence of which, every attention due to her rank had been commanded to be paid, with all the imposing appearance of willing obedience. But in order to counteract any danger which might arise from the fancied liberty she enjoyed, Roberto was strictly commanded to keep a watchful eye over her actions, and, upon no account whatsoever, to admit the intrusion of strangers. These commands he found no difficulty in obeying, even without apparent coercion; and so truly had her inestimable virtues obtained the ascendancy over the generality of the domestics, that confinement became a mere nominal idea; and when, from the appearance of convalescence in the health of Martuccio, her attendance upon him became less necessary, she would fre-

quently wander through the more desolate parts within the extensive boundaries of the Castle: yet, although this indulgence was constantly permitted her, Roberto, in order to blind Martuccio, and prevent his observing the hold she had taken possession of in his heart, would, upon such excursions, command a confidential servant to watch her motions, at such a distance as to be unperceived, or, if by accident they should meet, that it might appear the effect of chance rather than design. This generous man indeed looked forward to the day with impatience, when the departure of Martuccio would give him the uncontrouled liberty of acting as he pleased. He had at once penetrated his character, and found it dark and hollow within. To deceive him was absolutely necessary; yet many a pang obtruded upon his feelings, when, in the presence of his master's minion, he was obliged to act diametrically opposite to them.

Adeline had been a sufficient observer of
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of human nature in general, to enable her to discover with ease the sentiments of such as were appointed to attend her person; and her heart received a satisfaction of the highest kind, at the knowledge she obtained respecting those with whom her destiny had placed her. Retired to the security of her own apartment, which was uniformly held sacred, and which not even Martuccio dared enter, she fervently offered up her prayers to the Universal Protector of innocence, for having placed her, although among the horrific wilds of nature, in the hands of kindness and compassion; and, with a mind impressed and strengthened by this consolatory idea, she resolved to regulate her actions in such a manner as to merit the high confidence which they placed in her.

Several weeks elapsed in a calm desultory routine. Martuccio became convalescent, and was more than ever impatient for orders from Albert. The messenger whom he had, upon his first arrival at Mittewald,

sent with an account of his final success, had been absent much longer than was necessary to perform the journey to Clagenfurth, and back again. Still he came not; until at length, wearied out with conjectures, yet, like all those who are embarked in nefarious practices, dreading lest some unforeseen reverse of fortune had happened, he determined to leave his charge in the care of Roberto, and, unaccompanied by any of his attendants, to return privately to Clagenfurth. Having formed this resolution, he requested an audience of the Princess; for so exact had he been in the conduct of the outward respect, prescribed by Albert towards that unfortunate victim of his love and ambition, that he never presumed to approach her privacy, without her permission. Adeline felt rather surprised at the request; for, upon the directions of Albert being made known to her, through the friendly zeal of Roberto, she had constantly kept at a distance a man, whose

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presence

presence she detested, and whom nothing but the most pressing necessity could induce her to notice. It was seldom, therefore, that he ventured to urge a request which he always doubted might be refused, and which, as the commands of his sovereign were peremptory, and well known to all the inhabitants of the Castle, he was sensible he dared not enforce. A secret presentiment, that his purposed visit was the result of some resolution which his long confinement had obliged him to adopt, and which might prove to her advantage, prompted her to command his admission. To this indeed she was further induced by the conversations which she had frequently held with Agnes, who had observed that Martuccio had betrayed great impatience at having been detained so long in that retired spot, and had as often hinted an intention of leaving it. This being a circumstance which, she was sensible, would give real pleasure to the Princess, she imparted her suspicions to

her; and the latter hoped that the time was arrived when he intended to put his plan into execution, and that his motive for an audience was in consequence of the resolution which he had taken.

Upon the entrance of Martuccio into her apartment, the Princess slightly noticed him, by an inclination of the head, and, without offering him a seat, desired to know for what purpose he had thought it necessary to intrude upon her solitude? Martuccio, notwithstanding all his effrontery, felt abashed at the dignified, yet cavalier style in which she addressed him. His malignant heart, boiling with resentment at the hauteur with which she treated him, could scarce restrain the fury it engendered; and it was with the utmost difficulty he could bring his jarring feelings into a sufficient calmness to answer her question, without betraying the disorder of his thoughts. At length his usual duplicity obtained the ascendancy; and, beginning with an humble apology for all the hardships

ships which he had been so unfortunate as to occasion her, by executing the task imposed upon him by his sovereign, to whom he owed implicit obedience, he proceeded to solicit her pardon for all past offences, which, however great, he trusted her gentle nature would forgive, when she reflected that he was the agent only of a superior power, who wanted not emissaries to obey his commands, and who might possibly have selected one from whom she might have experienced still greater hardships. "Should, however," continued he, "the boon of forgiveness be at present denied me, I trust that time will operate to eradicate those impressions which, I perceive, have taken such deep root; and as the presence of a person so obnoxious cannot be agreeable, I have requested this audience merely to announce my intention of quitting this Castle, and to execute the remaining part of my orders, which were, to consign your person to the care and protection of Roberto, attended by those
servants

servants especially appointed by Albert for your service." Here Martuccio paused, as if awaiting a reply. No answer, however, was returned; but a trifling bend of her graceful form announced a ready acquiescence to his intended departure. Martuccio felt more confused, even than upon his first entrance. His senses seemed suspended; but at length finding the taciturnity of the Princess unconquerable, he summoned Roberto, who, having previously been made acquainted with his intentions, had attended him to the antichamber, and, upon his entrance, introduced him in a formal manner, as her future protector, until his sovereign's pleasure concerning her was more fully disclosed; adding, with a malignant sneer, and at the same time glancing his eyes towards Roberto, that as *he* was well acquainted with his master's secrets, he made no doubt but that he would prove as faithful a servant in this instance as he had in various others of a similar nature. Having uttered this sarcasm, evidently
thrown

thrown out to inspire the Princess with distrust, or rather terror, against her new protector, he again repeated his obeisance, and retired, accompanied by Roberto, who, upon leaving the apartment, said, in a tone of the utmost respect, that he would, with her permission, request an audience as soon as he had attended Martuccio to the drawbridge (a duty which he could not neglect), in order to receive her commands; and, in the mean time, would send Madalen and Agnes to attend her. To this respectful address the Princess returned an answer sufficiently expressive of her thanks for his considerate attention. Martuccio was not at such a distance, but that the voice of the Princess, in answer to Roberto, reached his ears. He stopped. He hesitated whether he should proceed, or, by remaining, preserve the power he at present had over the Princess. The glaring slight with which he was treated pierced his inmost soul. His heart muttered vengeance for the insult, and his visage, at
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the best ghastly, became so distorted with rage, that when Roberto, who had been delayed by the sending of Madalen and Agnes to the Princess, overtook him, he looked as if bereft of sense. Perceiving him in this condition, Roberto kindly inquired if he was ill, and recommended his postponing his departure. His voice recalled the recollection of Martuccio, who, casting a look of fury at his companion, rushed forward towards the drawbridge, without deigning to return any answer to the friendly inquirer, who, though in some measure astonished at the incivility, let down the bridge, with a full determination on his part that it should never again afford the wily Italian an entrance into the Castle of Mittewald, unless by the special command of Albert himself.

Soon after the departure of Martuccio, the Castle wore a very different aspect. Roberto had no sooner performed his duty, by inspecting the different guards, and seeing that all the avenues approach-

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ing to it were secured from any surprise, than he returned to the apartments of the Princess Adeline, whither he had before sent Madalen and Agnes to receive her orders, and endeavour, by their conciliating attention, to divert her mind from dwelling upon the misfortunes which had fallen so heavily upon her. His reception by the Princess was so strikingly different from that which she had been accustomed to treat Martuccio with, that it could not fail being noticed by the most indifferent spectator. Roberto felt the distinction, and his heart once more mentally swore to deserve the contrast. In making this distinction, however, the Princess wisely maintained the dignity of her rank; but such a suavity of expression accompanied all she uttered, that obedience to her wishes became a pleasure rather than a duty. The rest of the menials also, who had followed the example of Martuccio from fear only, being well acquainted with his implacable disposition, no sooner perceived

ceived the conduct pursued by their present superior, than they naturally copied it; and Adeline, except being deprived of the liberty of withdrawing herself from the Castle of Mittewald, might with justice be deemed the complete mistress of it and its dependants.

With the assistance of the few peasants in the neighbourhood, joined to her own household, the Princess had contrived to give an handsome appearance to the west wing, already partially inhabited. Several rooms, which from the accumulation of dust, appeared to have been unoccupied, and shut up for many years, were reopened, and, with infinite labour and perseverance, were cleansed of the rubbish which they contained, and refurnished by various articles found in other parts of that extensive building; and these, though of ancient structure, were not only found useful, but, having bade defiance to the ravages of time, were more consonant to the remainder, and were respectable from
their

their venerable appearance. In these, and similar employments, the Princess spent the first days of what she deemed her freedom ; but the discovery which afforded her the most satisfaction was a small library. It was indeed at a different part of the Castle from that which she inhabited ; but she found no difficulty in having the principal part of it removed into an apartment in the western buildings, which she adapted to the occasion. Here a new resource from ennui, or desperation, was opened to her view ; and, sensible of the indulgencies which she had so fortunately and unexpectedly met with, in a place where fancy painted only misery and wretchedness, her mind became more composed ; and reflecting upon that consolatory idea, that the Supreme Being is equally the dispenser of misery and happiness, and that whatsoever punishment he inflicts, or whatsoever gratification he bestows, is for the welfare of his creatures, she became more resolute than ever to submit

submit to her fate, and to await her deliverance with patience and resignation, until the time appointed by the grand Arbiter of her fate ; nor, by a mean endeavour to corrupt the fidelity of servants, attempt an escape from her present situation, unprotected.

Upon examining the books which she had caused to be removed, she discovered many manuscripts, which, upon a slight survey, seemed to contain some ancient records relative to the former proprietors of the Castle. These she carefully selected from the rest, intending to peruse them at her leisure ; as, from the little observation she cursorily made, they appeared, in many places, peculiarly interesting.

These various arrangements occupied some time, and before they were completed, the icy hand of winter had given place to the more genial warmth of the spring. The buds of those beautiful shrubs which ornament the forests beneath the warmth of an Italian sky, began to expand
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their odoriferous blossoms, dispensing the most delicious fragrance to the surrounding atmosphere. Adeline, among various other improvements which she had undertaken, had caused the walks within the interior of the Castle to be cleaned ; and in these, free from any apparent danger of interruption, would the Princess frequently wander, accompanied either by Madalen or Agnes. The latter, indeed, had so far ingratiated herself with Adeline, that she insensibly felt herself inclined to treat her rather as a friend than menial ; nor did her judgment, in this respect, betray her prudence, as, independent of a disposition amiable by nature, Agnes, previous to her joining her father Roberto, on his appointment to be the chief of Mittewald Castle, had a favourable opportunity of cultivating her understanding, by having received an appointment in a convent allotted for the education of the female branches of the nobility, the superior of which was a near relation of her mother.

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But, although at her first introduction to the society her protectress had merely intended her as an assistant, whose services, she judged, she could more readily depend upon than those of an alien, from the consanguinity which existed between them, and the gratitude which she flattered herself that her young and inexperienced mind would feel for the person who had removed her from a comparative insignificance to a superior rank in life, she soon perceived that her understanding was formed of such rich materials as required only a fostering hand to cultivate with assured success. Fortunately for the future happiness of her young relative, the mind of the abbess was divested of all that *littleness of idea*, if I may venture the expression, too generally the concomitant of a superiority of power, when the possessor of it has been raised from obscurity to pre-eminence. Instead, therefore, of employing her in the management of the household, as first intended, she permitted her to attend the different lectures

lectures received by the lay boarders, many of whom she soon equalled, if not excelled, in the various accomplishments deemed requisite for perfecting their education. Neither did this emulation of the youthful competitor create her enemies among those so much her superior in rank. Her modest diffidence, her readiness to oblige, together with various little traits of benevolence, which, though unable to gratify to the extent of her own wishes, she never failed of promoting among those whose affluence gave them the envied power of doing good, had so completely obtained for her the affections of the juvenile society, that all united in their endeavours to smooth any difficulty which obstructed her attainment of any particular science which she wished to make herself mistress of. Nor was it the least favourable part of her character, that, although she was tempted by the most splendid offers of future protection, from many sincerely willing to perform their promises,

mises, she resigned, without a sigh, every flattering prospect, when summoned to the assistance and support of her beloved parents.

Adorned with these accomplishments, she could not fail of creating a permanent interest in the heart of the Princess of Clagenfurth, who well knew how to appreciate the value of such a companion, whom she soon admitted to her entire confidence. With her she could freely enter into the cause of her alarms, and discuss the various measures by which she might elude, if not escape, the power of Albert. Indeed, it was become no inconsiderable matter of surprise to the Princess, as well as to Roberto himself, that no intelligence had arrived from Clagenfurth. Some months had passed since Adeline had been decoyed into the power of Albert, and more than a sufficient time had elapsed since Martuccio had left the Castle, for its inhabitants to have received some intelligence. Frequently would the Princess question

question Roberto, as if she thought that he might have heard from Albert; yet, wishing not to disturb the tranquillity which she seemed to enjoy, concealed the knowledge he had obtained. The answers, however, of Roberto to her anxious inquiries, were so open and undisguised, that Adeline was ultimately convinced that he remained in equal ignorance as herself of the concerns of his Prince. Various ideas as to the cause of this apparent neglect floated in her imagination, and her fancy busied itself in seeking for causes of this unaccountable conduct in Albert, who, but a few months before, had scarcely been restrained from violating the most holy sanctuary, in order to obtain possession of her person; yet now, when fortune had placed her completely in his power, and in a situation where he reigned the uncontrouled master of his will, he seemed totally to have forgotten her. Ruminating upon this subject, a latent hope would sometimes spring up, that the tyrant had

fallen a sacrifice to the avowed vengeance of her brother, Theodore de Mountfort, who perhaps was vainly seeking for his beloved sister, to restore her to the throne of her murdered husband. Yet this idea, flattering as it was, was but the vision of a moment, vanishing in incredulity as soon as formed. Alas ! had Adeline known the transactions of the last three months, how many unhappy moments had been spared the suffering victim, soon doomed to awake from the partial dreams of happiness which she had been permitted to enjoy !

It may be recollected, that we left Albert flying from before the walls of Clagenfurth, in a consternation that astonished, while his rapidity far distanced the few brave companions who attempted to follow him. But it was in vain that they attempted to pursue his tract. A supernatural power seemed to urge his speed, and hurry him forward, beyond all hopes of overtaking him ; and his weary and dispirited followers at once beheld themselves deserted by
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by their Prince, and deprived of every resource but the clemency of the victors, to whom they returned, bringing the latest intelligence of their fugitive sovereign.

The horse upon which Albert rode, disdaining every impediment, bore his unconscious master far from the walls and principality of Clagenfurth, nor stopped, until nature, quite exhausted, sunk beneath the exertion, and he fell, to rise no more. The shock aroused Albert from the insensibility with which he had seemed possessed since his eyes first encountered the mysterious banner. He gazed around him. A dark and dreary solitude met his inquiry. His senses seemed confused; visionary ideas floated upon his brain, and he sunk into a state of inanity, the heavens his canopy, and the damp turf his pillow. In this dangerous and uncomfortable situation, oblivion, for a short period, kindly shed its poppies upon his head, and morning dawned ere he had recovered the use of

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his faculties. His limbs felt benumbed, from the dampness of the bare earth upon which he had reposed, and a sickness, occasioned by excessive fatigue, both of body and mind, accompanied by a too long abstinence, threatened totally to exhaust a frame possessed of a more than ordinary share of human stability. In this dilemma, supporting his steps by the assistance of his sword, he determined upon seeking some place of human abode. The immediate calls of hunger had been partially satiated by various roots which the beneficent earth had afforded him, or by the wild berries of the forest, which grew in luxuriant abundance upon the adjacent trees. This scanty food served to support, although it did not invigorate the frame. It was however his only means of subsistence, and Albert hailed it as his preservation from destruction. Ignorant of the country, he wandered to and fro without pursuing any certain tract, until at length he found himself at the base of the Julian Alps.

Alps. He had now arrived at a spot of which he had some little recollection. This however, faint as it was, served rather to dispirit than encourage him. He was aware that the mountains were inhabited by a set of men, whom, by constant persecution, he had made his most inveterate enemies; and that, if he should encounter any of the society, death, if not a punishment more severe, would be the inevitable consequence. He was well armed; but neither that circumstance, nor his courage, would, he was sensible, avail him against superior numbers. Weary and dispirited, he at length seated himself beneath the shelter of an umbrageous oak, whose wide-spreading branches promised a security against the violence of the tempest which appeared gathering in the horizon. Reckless of its threatened fury, he beheld its gradual approach with calm indifference. Loud roared the wind, while the thunder, between whose awful reverberations, lightning of the most vivid hue

darted its forked rays in a thousand different directions, seemed ready to burst the mountains asunder, and to destroy the face of nature itself. To this elemental war Albert seemed insensible. His mind, rolling inward within itself, meditated upon the sad and unexpected reverse of fortune. The fatal prophecy was recalled to his recollection, and he cursed the hour when his heart became the slave of the demon of revenge. Yet, even amid these horrors, the Princess Adeline was not forgotten. Could he have obtained possession of her person, he thought he should still have been happy, notwithstanding the loss of power and dominion. Reflecting upon this idea, a ray of hope fluttered around his heart; and the thought, that perhaps she was at that instant under the care of his vassals, animated his drooping spirits. It is true, that he was unacquainted with the result arising from the plan of Martuccio, further than he had been informed by some of his emissaries, that the Princess

cess had left the convent to which she had originally flown for protection, and where she had resided since the conquest of Clagenfurth ; but who was the companion of her flight, or in what manner she had effected her escape, was unknown to his informers. The great hurry of business in which he had been engaged, owing to the defection of the Chevalier D'Armfeldt, and the subsequent attack of Clagenfurth, had prevented his estimating the length of time that Martuccio had been absent ; but when he reflected that so long a period had elapsed without his having received any intelligence from him (for the messenger first sent by Martuccio from Mittelewald had fallen into the hands of some of that daring society of which Berthold had the command, and had been sent to their usual place of confinement for prisoners, until the return of their chief fixed his doom), he either augured the defeat of his plan, or that Martuccio had himself turned a traitor, and, yielding to the re-

presentations and entreaties of the Princess; had conveyed her to a place of security from all his future attempts. Indeed he began to fancy that the late attack was stimulated by her, as the partial glance which he caught of the hero who commanded the adverse forces, almost convinced him that it was Theodore de Mountfort.

While these ideas floated in his imagination, the tempest still howled around him; yet the awful scene, instead of depressing, seemed to strengthen his agitated mind, and with the returning calm of the atmosphere, the fortitude and self-possession of Albert returned. The shock which he had received by the unexpected display of the mystic banner, was in a great measure obliterated, and he even wondered at the unaccountable impression which it had made upon him. It was however too late to remedy the past. Still a ray of light broke in among the darkness of despair. Fate had declared the
means

means by which he might avoid the most dreadful consequences of his ungovernable passions. The restoration of the right heir to the principality of Clagenfurth, was promised as an ample propitiatory sacrifice.

Albert, politic in his designs, had never for an instant lost sight of the latter part of the prophecy. It was for this reason that he became so anxious to discover to what part of the globe the young Prince Rodolphus had been conveyed, as it became an object of the first consequence to him to obtain, if possible, the possession of his person, as he might then dispose of him as circumstances admitted ; and, at all events, he would become a dernier resource against the threatened reverse of fortune. The discovery which he had made, through the treachery of the person entrusted by the Abbess of St. Veil, that a child, by a prior marriage of the late Prince of Clagenfurth, was in existence, and was entrusted to the care of the

Abbess of St. Pierre, was to him of the utmost importance; and as, by the same information, he found it was a female, it created a new interest in his heart. For although the Princess Adeline maintained her ascendancy over him, still he considered, that if he could get possession of the young Matilda, he might force her to become his wife, thereby centering in her person a claim to the principality. He was sensible that this scheme was liable to many obstructions, as it was not to be supposed that the mother, and other friends of Rodolphus, would tamely see his patrimony usurped by the husband of his sister. To repel this, however, he trusted to the real power he possessed, as well as to the uncertainty of the re-appearance of Rodolphus, as neither himself, nor those by whom he had been withdrawn from the destruction with which his house was overwhelmed, had ever been heard of. The consequence of the attempt to obtain possession of Matilda has been already

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related.

related. It was, as justly suspected by Sternheim, a manœuvre of Albert's, who, by the assistance of the traitress in the convent of St. Veil, before alluded to, had obtained a copy of the secret order necessary to be transmitted to St. Pierre, as a passport to sanction the delivery of the young Princess to those appointed as her escort; the original of which, this treacherous confidant, who had free access to the private drawers of the unsuspecting abbess, found, and copied with the most scrupulous exactness.

The ruffian who was wounded by Berthold, but escaped, reached his employer in safety, and gave a circumstantial account of the whole transaction. The disappointment of Albert was at first extreme, though his passion for Adeline served to lessen the effect. One consolation, however, he flattered himself he derived from it, namely, that the young Matilda would in future be no impediment to his quiet possession of the sovereignty of Clagen-

further, as he deemed her having fallen into the hands of the banditti, equivalent, in its consequences, to death itself.

The sun had dispersed the lowering clouds, and renovated nature with its genial warmth, when Albert, after partaking of the homely food which the surrounding shrubs afforded, and quenched his thirst at the clear and limpid stream which flowed from the neighbouring mountains into the vale beneath, prepared to set forward in the direction of Mittelewald, where, if Martuccio had been successful, he judged that he should find the Princess of Clagenfurth, a rich reward for all his sufferings. Even if he should be disappointed, he should at least be among the ancient vassals of his family, and possessed of a rallying point, where he could collect together the friends that still adhered to him, and from whence he could in security direct his future operations. Many years had passed since he had been within its walls. He was aware, however,
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of its strength ; and he doubted not but that he should, in a short time, be able to collect together such a force as would be sufficient for him once more to take the field, and wipe off the foul disgrace his army had so recently suffered. The journey to Mittewald was long and dreary. He was almost totally ignorant of the road to it, his sole knowledge consisting in the certainty that it lay in an easterly direction from the place in which he then was. Report had spread various tales of the most hazardous import, respecting the murderous transactions which had taken place throughout the whole country, and more particularly in the passage of the Julian Alps. These, though circulated by the timid and superstitious peasantry, and evidently exaggerated, were not entirely to be disregarded, or treated as frivolous ; and Albert, instead of rashly braving danger, determined to travel with as much circumspection as possible. For this purpose he converted the scarf which he wore
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into a satchel, which, fearful he might sometime find a difficulty of providing food, he providently filled with roots and berries, which were in abundance; and slinging it over his shoulders upon his sword, he set forward upon his perilous undertaking.

How dreadful the reverse of fortune! But a few short days had passed, ere surrounded with wealth and power, his will his law, his voice the fiat, he looked down upon the fawning multitude, as beings of an inferior species, born only to administer to his wishes, and to be slaves to his commands. Each morn, at the rising dawn, thousands of prostrate menials hailed the return of light, that they might pour forth their fulsome adulations to the pageant of greatness; while each attending courtier waited in anxious expectation of catching the eye of his sovereign, or of receiving the smile of approbation. Behold him now abandoned by those he placed his greatest confidence in, deprived
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of his rank and dominions, a poor solitary exile, the damp earth his pillow, the wide expanse of air his only covering ; while the root, extracted with toil and manual labour from the earth, or perhaps the scanty remains of the half-devoured berry, were the sole substitutes for the luxurious viands of the royal table ! Yet even this reverse, terrible as it was, might have been borne with patience and resignation, had not a silent monitor from within reminded him that he had provoked his fate. The Prince had not proceeded far upon his journey ere he fancied that he heard the sound of horses approaching in the direction in which he was travelling. As caution was necessary, he resolved, if possible, to avoid them, which he conceived he might easily contrive, as the road in which he was abounded with caverns, excavated by the hand of nature from those solid rocks which constituted the basis of those tremendous mountains over which his passage lay. Report indeed averred, that many of these
extended

extended an immense way beneath the centre of the earth, and were frequently used as the asylum of the banditti, and sometimes as a retreat for the beasts of prey, that abounded in those desolate regions, who not unfrequently made use of these hiding-places near the road, that they might attack, unperceived, the incautious traveller. Albert, however, had no time for hesitation ; either he must boldly meet the approaching dangers, or run, most probably, the lesser risk of savage or human foes. He accordingly entered the nearest, and had the satisfaction of finding, that if it ever had been the residence of a savage tenant, it was then uninhabited ; neither did any trace remain that indicated the smallest danger from their intrusion, or the more dreaded one of banditti. The mouth of the cavern was so extremely narrow, that only one man could enter at a time. It was therefore easy to be defended ; and Albert thought himself extremely fortunate at having discovered

discovered such an asylum, which would not only screen him from the observation of the horsemen, whom he supposed were approaching, but also, as from his late great exertions, he felt himself fatigued, and the day was nearly at its close, would be the most secure shelter he could meet with, in which he could pass the night. Having therefore secured the entrance next the road, as well as the scanty materials with which he was furnished would admit, he awaited, in anxious expectation of seeing the travellers. His impatience was soon gratified, as he had but just completed his means of defence when they made their appearance. Great, however, was his astonishment, when he beheld a female of the most exquisite beauty, habited as an huntress of the Alps, and accompanied by two cavaliers, one of whom seemed considerably younger than the other. He gazed with admiration upon features which he almost fancied were familiar to him. They reminded him of

Adeline ;

Adeline ; and, for an instant, he gave himself up to the idea that it was the Princess of Clagenfurth. Upon reflection, however, he thought that impossible, as even if she had escaped his machinations, he could not suppose that she would entrust herself with so slender an escort, through roads considered dangerous in the extreme. It is true, that he might easily be deceived in the resemblance, as the view he had of the person was but transient.

It happened, that a break in the mountains, directly opposite to the mouth of the cavern in which Albert had so hastily concealed himself, afforded a prospect that never failed to attract the notice and admiration of the passing traveller. The party who had alarmed him were not less void of curiosity than others had been, and they accordingly stopped to take a survey of the surrounding scenery. A spirited conversation ensued, in the course of which the elder cavalier appeared to recount various traditionary tales relative to the neighbourhood.

neighbourhood. Albert was at too great a distance to overhear their whole discourse, yet he fancied that he sometimes caught the sound of his own name. The fear of discovery prevented his endeavouring to approach nearer, though he was extremely anxious to obtain a more distinct view of the female. At length they prepared to continue their journey, but passing close to the mouth of the cavern, and before they had proceeded out of the hearing of Albert, the elder chevalier addressed his companion in a tone sufficiently loud to be distinguished by him, saying, "Despair not; the Princess Adeline will soon be found, and restored to the protection of her anxious relatives. The long suspended vengeance has fallen upon the tyrant, who, hurled from his throne, is become a wretched wanderer, the victim of his own ungovernable passions."

Astonishment at such an unexpected denouncement rendered Albert motionless, and ere he could recall his scattered senses,
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the winding of the road prevented his making any further observations upon the party. His ideas were at variance with each other. The thought of one moment propelled him to follow the travellers at a proper distance, so as to escape their observation, in the hopes that some fortunate occurrence might dispel this mystery, and perhaps afford him information of the utmost consequence in the present posture of his affairs. It was evident, that whoever these unknown personages were, they were intimately connected, and indeed appeared well acquainted with his concerns. The risk, however, of being discovered was great; and in addition to this, which, in the present tenor of his mind, made a considerable impression upon it, by pursuing their tract, he was not only drawing himself at a greater distance from his late determined object, but, by nearly retracing his steps, he might throw himself into the midst of his most inveterate and unappeased enemies. One of those unforeseen casualties,

casualties, however, which so frequently determine the lot of man, fixed his irresolution.

The travellers had scarcely disappeared from his view, when a piercing shriek arrested his attention. Albert doubted not but that some accident had happened, which had caused an alarm in the female whom he had just seen. The cry of distress could not be heard with indifference by the fugitive Prince, who, although he had become the victim of his own unruly passions, had not entirely expunged from his heart many of those noble qualities which, in his earlier days, had rendered him the delight and admiration of his friends. In the hopes, therefore, of affording timely assistance, if necessary, every idea of impending danger, upon his own account, was entirely obliterated; and hastily displacing the barrier with which he had secured his retreat, he rushed hastily over the craggy rocks, in the hopes of finding a nearer passage to the spot from whence

whence the sound proceeded. No sooner had he gained a small ascent, than he perceived a female, who, by her apparel, he made no doubt was the one who had just passed his retreat on horseback, lying upon the bank by the side of the road in a state of insensibility, and supported by the elder of the two men who accompanied her. The youth was absent, and by the distant clattering of hoofs, Albert naturally supposed that he was gone in pursuit of the lady's horse, leaving his companion in charge of their mutual protegee. All fears for his personal safety immediately vanished, and he hastened forward, with increased expedition, to proffer his assistance. The companion of the lady perceived his approach, and laying his beauteous burthen, whom he supported in his arms, still insensible, upon the ground, from which he had before raised her, he prepared for resistance, naturally supposing, from the haggard and uncouth appearance of the intruder, that he belonged to that predatory

datory society who were reported to inhabit some parts of that mountainous district ; for so greatly had the hardships which he had undergone, the want of proper food, together with the disguise which he had judged necessary to adopt, altered the dignified person of the Prince, even in so short a period, as to leave but little remains of the original. The fire of his eye was degenerated into a haggard fierceness of expression, that terrified, instead of animating the beholder ; while his muscular features, rendered more distinguished by the pallidity of his countenance, rendered his appearance inexpressibly terrific at first sight. Still there was a nobleness of character that beamed through the dark shade, and seemed to prove that some dire misfortunes had caused the change. Albert immediately conjectured the suspicions of the stranger, and sensible of their justness, hastened to remove them, by courteously offering him his sword. This action naturally produced
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the intended effect; and the stranger, sheathing his own, which he had drawn to defend himself, again raised his beauteous companion from the earth, while Albert, struck with the elegance of her form, and that beauty, which was sufficiently conspicuous, even in the state he beheld her, and notwithstanding he felt that he could gaze for ever upon her charms, hastily rushed to a spot in which he had observed a small but clear stream of water, and brought some of the welcome beverage in his helmet, which, upon this emergency, he was obliged to substitute for a more regular conveyance. A proper application of the refreshing stream soon restored the fair to a state of recollection. Upon opening her eyes she seemed extremely agitated, and it was with the utmost difficulty that they could prevent a relapse into her former state of inanity. A cordial, however, which the eldest of the travellers administered to her, produced the wished-for effect. Terror still seemed to reign
predominant

predominant in her mind ; she gazed wildly around, as if expecting the appearance of some object of horror ; while both Albert and his companion endeavoured to assure her that she was in perfect safety. In a short time her senses appeared collected, and perceiving the kind attention of those about her, she became convinced that they were friends whom she might place a confidence in : accordingly, gracefully thanking them for their late kindness, she observed, that although her obligations to them were such as she could never repay, as to them she owed her deliverance from a fate perhaps worse than death, still she was sorry to trespass upon their further kindness, and conduct her to her father's house, which was situated at some distance from the road ; and where, she was well assured, they would be received with acknowledgments, if not equal to their deserts, at least with such as were the result of real sincerity.

This request surprised Albert, who gazing

first upon one, and then upon the other, was going to inquire into this mysterious conduct, when the chevalier solved the difficulty, by observing, that although he was extremely anxious to overtake his young companion, whose horse had taken fright upon the late occasion, yet, that he could not think of leaving her, until such time as he had restored her to the arms of a parent, who must, doubtless, be rendered very uneasy at her long absence.

Albert now perceived the mistake which he had fallen into; a mistake, however, which, on a moment's consideration, was easily accounted for, as both were habited in the usual costume of those who followed the chace, and were indiscriminately denominated *Huntresses of the Alps*. As a freedom of conversation had taken place of reserve, the young huntress found, to her surprise, that her present protectors were equally as unknown to each other as to herself, and that it was to a fortunate coincidence of circumstances alone that she
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was indebted for the protection which she received.

Albert, who thought that the tones of her voice were as sweet as the expression of her features, in order to enjoy her conversation, ventured to inquire, by what means she became exposed to so great a hazard which she appeared to have experienced, and at so great a distance from the abode of her parent? Ere, however, she could reply, the chevalier, addressing her, observed, that he was certain, if the request of his companion would give her one moment's pain, that he would not wish to gratify his curiosity at so great an expence; adding, that should she feel no repugnance in the relation, it would give him great satisfaction to learn the extent of the danger from which he had been the fortunate instrument of her delivery, as the whole of his knowledge consisted solely in the circumstance of her suddenly rushing from the opposite side of the road, before the tract of their horses, claiming protection.

The sudden appearance, as before observed, had alarmed the horses of his companions, and ere he could himself recover from his astonishment, she had sunk lifeless upon the ground. It was, however, in vain that he looked round expecting to see the cause of so extraordinary a circumstance; neither did he see any thing to cause an alarm, until the first appearance of their present companion rather startled him.

“To you, gentlemen,” replied the fair huntress, “I cannot give a refusal, although, by granting your request, I may give you ample reason to condemn my prudence.”

Several compliments, called forth upon this observation, having passed, she observed, that to put a stop to such effusions of gallantry, and to beguile the way, which, having a horse with them, would be rendered rather more tedious, as they could not pursue the shorter tract over the mountains, she would begin the history of her past life, to elucidate which, however, she must take an earlier sketch of her family.

“My

“My father,” continued she, “prior to his marriage, held a situation of great trust and honour in his native kingdom. I must, however, be excused from mentioning either the name of the country, or his own, the latter of which he has thought proper to conceal under the assumed one of the Chevalier De Rottenberg. The Chevalier, early in life, married, with the entire approbation of both parties, a lady of high rank, but whose family had been reduced, by a series of unavoidable misfortunes, to a situation scarcely above the mediocrity of life. As fortune was no object to a person whose own was at that time princely, no objection was made upon that score, and Constantia became the adored wife of De Rottenberg. I am the sole remaining issue of that marriage, which, at its outset, promised the enjoyment of all earthly happiness.

“In order to conciliate the esteem of a distant female relation, whose pride equalled, if not, exceeded, any of the most princely extraction, I was, much against the

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wishes both of my father and mother, called after her."

Here the fair huntress paused, but with a blush of modest confusion continued—"I must request your pardon, if under the existing circumstances, I also conceal my real name, under the feigned one of Alphonsine, as my own is so very singular, that the mention of it might betray to strangers that secret which my father has hitherto taken, and with success, so much pains to conceal. To you, therefore, gentlemen, I beg leave to be known only by that appellation."

Her auditors, already become deeply interested, returned a suitable answer, requesting only the relation of such parts of her history as she might deem prudent, and making an apology even for such a request, Alphonsine continued:—"I should pass over the period of my youth as little interesting, had not our misfortunes originated during that period; and as my father has taken pains to make me acquainted

quainted with the real facts, they are so indented upon my memory, as to seem almost as if I had myself taken an active part in the transactions of a time, when all my hopes and fears consisted solely in the innocent diversions of my nursery.

“ The first, and indeed the fatal origin of our misfortunes, was the premature death of my mother, who dedicated her whole time to me, but whose fond endearments I was not permitted long to enjoy, as the ensuing year terminated her existence, in giving birth to a second child, which proving to be a boy, was consequently received by the united family with the greatest joy, but by no one more apparently than the relative I have before mentioned, who, although she had before answered for me at the font, now again insisted upon the same privilege, and was again, if possible, more unwillingly accepted. Alas! their happiness was but of short duration, as, ere the morning subsequent to the fete given upon the occasion of the *name-day* dawned,

both the mother and infant were removed from this transitory life, to a better world.

“ Such a sudden and unexpected event filled the castle with the utmost consternation. My mother had been rather more indisposed than usual, but no apprehensions of immediate danger were entertained by any of the medical tribe; and in respect to the infant, he had but the previous morning appeared the picture of health.

“ As soon as the consternation had in some measure subsided, a strict examination of those appointed to attend the deceased was instituted. The distress of my father was too great to admit of his taking an active part, and as the relatives of my mother were deemed by the Countess of too little consequence to preside over an investigation of such importance, she, in the absence of an uncle, who was then engaged in the service of the Emperor, and commanded a considerable detachment, then upon the point of encountering the enemy, took upon herself the management of the whole business.

business. Every servant was examined, but, to the great surprise of the whole family, nothing respecting the facts which were disclosed were ever made known, except to my father, with whom my godmother was in close conversation for some time, at the conclusion of the investigation. As every order now emanated from her whom, for the sake of distinction, I shall call the Countess, the funeral was conducted without that accustomed pomp and ceremony which had been the immemorial practice of the family. This circumstance alone gave rise to many conjectures; neither were some of the most horrid nature spared upon the occasion; but as the Chevalier was uniformly silent, and seemed totally to disregard the reports, which he could not fail of hearing, no one thought themselves authorized to interfere.

“ It was too evident, however, that the general behaviour of my father was entirely changed; and that the circumstances which had transpired had made a deep impression

upon his mind. Far from seeking that repose which Nature demands, he would frequently pass whole nights in the most gloomy solitude, or in wandering around the precincts of the castle, exposed to the impetuous fury of the tempest, which threatened destruction to the massy pile that nodded in tremendous grandeur above his head. His affability was changed to moroseness, and his once happy vassals unexpectedly beheld a tyrant in one whom they had been accustomed almost to worship as their father and benefactor. Justice gave way to oppression ; the management of his ample revenue was either neglected, or given over to strangers ; and desolation made the most rapid strides upon a fortune more than equal to many of the neighbouring princes.

“ Had the mischief been confined to his own family, public disgrace might have been avoided ; but his enemies, who had too much plausible reason, represented his conduct in such glaring colours at the court
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of his sovereign, that it required the utmost exertions of his numerous and powerful relatives, who pitied his misfortunes, to prevent a fatal and ignominious punishment: they pleaded, and with a degree of justice, that his late conduct proceeded, not from an innate principle of evil, of which the tenor of his former life was an undeniable evidence, but from a derangement of the general system, occasioned by the sudden and violent shock which it had received in the loss of his beloved wife and his new-born heir. This excuse might perhaps have been admitted as a palliation for his behaviour, had he not, in numerous other respects, proved himself in full possession of his understanding. Suffice it to say, that his enemies triumphed; and, as a favour, he was permitted to quit his paternal castle, after placing his still ample patrimony in the hands of trustees, who were to be accountable to him for the produce, under certain restrictions. One condition was peremptorily annexed, which was, that

in future he might reside wherever he chose, except in any part of the dominions belonging to the sovereign he then owed allegiance to; neither was he ever to approach the capital, under pain of perpetual imprisonment.

“ It might perhaps have been dangerous to have exacted such conditions, had not the friends of the Chevalier thought that absence from the scene of his misfortunes would be the most ready means of restoring his mind to its proper bias. They had frequently endeavoured to persuade him to travel, but without effect, and in this refusal he was constantly upheld by the Countess. Her motives were evident; she was sensible that the power which she had so long exclusively enjoyed, and which, under the pretence of his incapacity, she exercised in an unlimited degree, would immediately cease upon his departure, and that she would be obliged to quit the castle, and return to her own demesne. This decree, however, obliged her to acquiesce, however

however reluctant; yet, even at this last moment, she attempted to exert the authority which she had so long possessed over the actions of my unfortunate father, by depriving him of the sole consolation that could sooth his exile, as she insisted that I should be left under her protection. This request, or rather demand, aroused all the nobler passions of my father; the dispute arose to a great height; but paternal affection gained the victory, though with the loss of the Countess's friendship, and threats of a severe retaliation.

“Several years before these misfortunes took place, my father had in the course of his travels passed over the Julian Alps; he was delighted with the country, and with the romantic scenery with which it abounded. The retirement of many of the cottages scattered over the mountains, seemed suited to his ideas, and he requested one of those sincere friends, who still adhered to him in his distress, to procure him a situation such as he described. The spot

to which I am now conducting you, is that chosen upon the occasion; there have I passed nearly fourteen years of my life, as, at the time of our emigration, I was nearly three years old.

“ I will not fatigue you with the various transactions which occurred, until I arrived at an age when the expanding mind ventures to burst the limits within which it had been restrained, and dared to meditate upon passing events. In this retirement the ideas of my father were totally absorbed in watching over and attending to my education; the employment seemed to mitigate the force of those impressions under which, young as I then was, I perceived he laboured; well informed himself, he took pains to inculcate in my mind those duties which he taught me might be demanded of me at some future period of life; yet, still devoid of society, except such as the peasantry afforded, many hours threatened to hang heavy upon our hands. To counterbalance this, the Chevalier, as soon as I was

was

was of an age to bear fatigue, would, according to the custom of the country, take me with him to the sports of the chace, thereby inuring me to dangers which the sex in general would shrink from; and which, I must confess, are far from being an ornament to them. Here, however, doomed perhaps forever to obscurity and retirement, these considerations were of trivial moment; and I insensibly fell into the proposed amusement, not only with ease, but avidity. This mode of life was well calculated to strengthen my mind against the sudden impressions of fear; and by degrees, neither the howling of wolves, or even the approach of the Alpine bear, caused the slightest emotion of terror.

“ When reason had taught me some little degree of discrimination, I perceived that the gloom in my father, which in my more juvenile days I had frequently witnessed, and indeed suffered from, had given way to a more lively disposition; the cottage no longer became unfrequented, and messen-
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gers were employed upon various occasions, although I was kept entirely ignorant of their purport.

“ One morning, on my return from the chace, to which I had accompanied some of the neighbouring peasantry, I was agreeably surprised by the introduction of a lady to me, whose appearance was of such a commanding, yet conciliating a nature, as to captivate at the first sight. As soon as the formal ceremony of introduction was over, the conversation became free and unrestrained; and from that moment a sincere friendship was established between us. It is true, she was my superior in age; yet this, far from deterring me from courting a familiarity, seemed the most forcible motive for my attachment. She was announced to me by my father, as a near relation of that friend with whom, as I before observed, he kept up a constant though secret correspondence. Alas! how uneasy will this temporary absence make her, and how severely have I to lament my indiscretion,

indiscretion, in not having listened to her advice ! for I must confess, that it was contrary to her earnest entreaties that I left our chosen retreat ; and this morning, for the first time, saw us separate with displeasure. Her heart, however, sensibly alive to the dangers I have undergone, will, I doubt not, spare those reproaches I am conscious of having deserved, nor will she be sufficiently thankful to my generous protectors. But I will now proceed to relate the circumstances which ultimately threw me upon your protection, and probably saved me from a fate worse than death itself.

“ I have observed that the spirits of the Chevalier De Rottenberg increased with my years ; indeed, he often gave hints that it was his intention of once more encountering the busy scenes of life, and, in defiance of the obstacles by which he was surrounded, of demanding from the magnanimity of the newly-elected Emperor, the revision of those

those malicious informations which had so greatly prejudiced his former sovereign against him, as even to deny him the common appeals of justice. Buoyed up with these ideas, his mind once more became active ; and it was then that he disclosed to me the events of the last seventeen years, that I might, as he observed, most cautiously avoid, upon entering into the busy scenes of the world, any connexion with those families who had been the primary instigators of his misfortunes. This restriction was most emphatically enforced, not only by my father, but by the amiable Madame Steller, who pointed out, in language the most persuasive and convincing, the manifold evils which might arise from such a want of circumspection. You may be sensible, gentlemen, that I had little difficulty in promising obedience, as my only happiness consisted in endeavouring to promote that of my father, who, notwithstanding the unhappiness that preyed upon his mind,

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had ever proved most indulgent to me, and whose wishes I had ever obeyed with the most heartfelt pleasure.

“ About a mile from our retreat lived a family, whose poverty had excited the compassion of the Chevalier, and he had not only occasionally relieved them, but had even made their late forlorn habitation comfortable. The walk to it was the most romantic in the neighbourhood ; frequently had I carried little presents to its inhabitants, as, although it was lonely and unfrequented, no idea of any danger had ever been thought on. The performance of this duty had become so pleasing to me, as even to make the omission a matter of vexation. To see a family, consisting of four small children, the eldest not more than nine years old, smiling in their parents’ faces, while they distributed their allotted portion of food to them, was a scene so truly consonant to my feelings, that it was with great difficulty I could restrain them within proper bounds ; neither, I flatter myself,

myself, will you deem this sensibility a weakness, when I was conscious that a few short weeks had made the abode of the most abject misery a palace, and that this transformation had arisen through the benevolence of a parent whom I adored. Chance led to the discovery of their wretchedness. As returning from the chace one morning earlier than usual, we perceived the eldest of the children, almost naked, picking the berries which grew in abundance in the neighbourhood, an impulse, more noble I trust than curiosity, impelled my father to inquire to what use they were to be applied? as we observed that he wrapped some up, in as careful a manner as he was able, in the remains of a ragged stuff. His answer gave me a sensation which I cannot describe, and which was heightened by encountering, at the same instant, the eyes of my father; ‘They are, (said he, while the tears ran down his wan cheeks), for my poor father, who is lame, and my mother, my brothers, and sister.’

‘How!’

‘How!’ exclaimed the Chevalier; ‘is that the only food you have for your subsistence?’

‘No,’ replied the child, ‘my mother gets some little by her work; but since my father met with the accident which confines him, the trifle which she can procure cannot much longer keep us from starving.’

‘Cannot you,’ asked my father, ‘get something to assist them?’

‘Alas, Sir,’ said he, ‘the small matter I was enabled to earn we are now deprived of, as I am obliged to remain at home, to attend upon my father, and look after my brothers and sisters, while my mother is employed in her daily labour.’

“Struck with the apparent misery, as well as the artless simplicity of the tale, we desired him to shew us the way to his cottage; the boy hesitated; but, upon being assured that we would endeavour to render his family more comfortable, he consented. It did not occasion

sion us to deviate in any great degree from the road which led to our own habitation, and as our little guide seemed perfectly conversant with the different bye-paths, we soon arrived at our purposed destination. But as this digression, though the original cause, is rather irrelevant to this morning's encounter, and must, I fear, weary the complacent patience of my generous deliverers, I shall pass over in silence the interview with the inhabitants of this dreary abode, and proceed to relate my first, and I hope my last act of disobedience to the entreaties of my friendly monitress."

"We cannot," exclaimed Albert, (who during the narrative of Alphonsine, seemed to forget every idea of his own situation), "permit you to gloss over the exercise of virtues which are the true tests of a noble and benevolent mind; and, believe me, if I can judge from the eager attention of my companion, that far from experiencing fatigue, we shall only have to lament a
too

too premature conclusion of an adventure, which at its outset promises to prove of so interesting a nature."

A reply suited to the occasion having been given, the fair huntress continued

"The exterior of the habitation, if it deserved the name, was well calculated to prepare us for the scene that awaited us within its walls. They had originally been built with mud; but time, or some other cause, had made such various depredations upon them, as to prevent their affording a sufficient shelter from the inclemency of the weather. This, however, was but an insignificant portion of wretchedness, to that which we encountered upon our entrance into this miserable hovel.

"A fire, consisting of a few sticks collected from the forest, seemed, by its reflection on the black mouldy walls, to add to, rather than dissipate the gloomy appearance that reigned through the solitary apartment. By the side of it sat a man upon a small wooden bench; his right leg supported

supported by a stool of the same quality, and bandaged up as well as his scanty means would afford. It had been severely cut by an axe, about a fortnight previous to our fortunate encounter with his boy; by which means he was totally deprived of procuring that maintenance for his family, which by his industry he had hitherto sheltered from the more pressing necessities of want; and as surgical assistance is not to be procured but from a great distance, and at an expence too large for the resources of a poor labouring peasant, the wound was of necessity left principally to the cure of Nature; but although this might perhaps be the safest mode, aided by a good constitution, yet still it delayed the cure, and rendered the situation of the family more deplorable.

“ The three youngest of his children were laying upon the ground around him, lisping out their little wants, while the agony of being unable to supply them, forced the tears down his manly cheeks. Upon our entrance, he seemed much surprised;

prised ; and the poor little innocents, starting up from their recumbent postures, ran close to him, as if to claim his protection against the intruders. Before their parent had time to speak, my father, anxious to relieve the misery so strongly depicted in his wan countenance, assured him that he deemed it as one of the most fortunate moments of his life, that accident had thrown his eldest boy in his way, who had, with all the impressive and genuine innocence of Nature, described his situation, though, he confessed, inadequate to the reality. He assured him, however, of immediate relief, and that if upon further inquiry he proved deserving of his patronage, he should always enjoy his protection, as he would take the charge of his family upon himself.

“ To describe the feelings of the invalid is impossible ; utterance was denied him ; he gazed first wildly upon my father and myself, then upon his children, whom he clasped alternately in his arms. The conflict however was too great ; and had not

my father rushed forward and caught him in his arms, he must have fallen from the feeble support which propped him, and might probably have rendered himself a cripple for life.

“ It was our custom to carry some cordials with us when taking the diversion of hunting; fortunately they were not exhausted; and a sufficient quantity being administered, it soon restored him to the recollection of the scene before him.

“ My father, perceiving that he was sufficiently recovered to converse, asked various questions relative to his regular employment, and particularly the occasion of his accident; he was more minute in his inquiries, knowing that the banditti, whose principal place of habitation was in the interior recesses of the mountains, frequently possessed cottages at a distance, to which, when they could be spared from the necessary duties allotted to them, they would sometimes repair. Some instances, though not frequent ones, had occurred
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when these men, having contracted a female connexion, had married, especially when they had arrived at that rank in the society which intitled them to superior privileges.

“ The idea that the invalid might be of that description, crossed the imagination of my father at the first view of him ; as, independent of his sickly appearance, which was evidently the result of the deprivation of proper nutriment, his countenance was of the most manly cast, and his form of a powerful and robust mould. He however endeavoured to conceal his suspicions, and determined that his future conduct towards him should be guided by the history of his life. The answers to the various subtile questions which were put to him, were such as greatly to contribute to banish the hasty-formed idea, which was entirely obliterated by our new protegee, who, from the minuteness of the inquiry, at last perceived the tendency of it ; when, taking advantage of a pause in the conversation, he modestly observed, that the questions

which he had been asked were such as were naturally to be expected by a person in his situation, as he was well aware of the tenor of them, having been acquainted with a family who had permitted one of the mountain banditti to become a member of it, by marrying their daughter. In respect to himself, however, he could call every thing sacred to witness that he was free from any charge that malice itself could bring against him, which would tend to criminate him, either in violating the laws of society at large, or, he flattered himself, of that particular community who were his present associates; adding, that when his beloved Theresa returned, she should conduct him, if he pleased, to the principal inhabitants of the neighbouring village, to whom he had been known from his earliest years.

“ The glow arising from a consciousness that his rectitude had been doubted, though that doubt was justifiable, was, to my father, a more convincing proof of the truth of the peasant’s assertion than any words could
give ;

give; and perceiving that he felt hurt at the suspicion, we hastened to assure him that even had our first conjectures been well grounded, humanity would have taught us to assist the unfortunate; but that being now assured that he filled the place in society allotted him by fortune, with honour and propriety, our future care would be to render that permanent assistance which would preclude the return of that distress we were then the witnesses of.

“ Thus satisfied, we prepared to depart, in order to send immediate assistance, and, if possible, to remove the whole family into a more eligible situation; but the peasant, perceiving our intention, requested us, with the utmost humility, if not encroaching too much upon our time, to remain with him until Theresa returned, as he was fearful respecting the consequences which so sudden and unexpected a change might occasion to feelings rendered more acute by past sufferings, and the dreary prospect which she contemplated as to the future

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provision

provision for her family ; adding, that although he must sincerely thank us for our kind intentions of affording such speedy relief, yet that the joy which he that day experienced would be a sufficient renovation to his spirits ; ‘ and these infants,’ continued he, looking at and embracing them with renewed energy, ‘ will enjoy a full meal, this being the day when their mother brings home the scanty pittance which has hitherto been our whole allowance for the week, but which now may, through your beneficent intentions, be appropriated as Nature requires.’

“ As the day was not far advanced, I ventured, by a look, to express to my father my inclination of acquiescing in the request of the invalid. He readily comprehended my meaning, and declared his consent. I must confess, that although the reasons assigned by the peasant had some weight with me, yet that I was principally actuated by motives of curiosity, as I was anxious to see with what a small portion of
food

food Nature could be supported, even in any degree, for such a space of time.

“Our patience was not put to any great trial, as one of the children (for one or other of them had, after their first fears subsided, ran backward and forward to the door) announced the approach of their mother. They were all upon the point of rushing out, no doubt to tell the glad tidings, but their father prevented them, by saying—‘Remain where you are, my children; our noble benefactors shall have the satisfaction of beholding Nature in its rude, but genuine garb.’ The orders were obeyed, though with reluctance; and I must confess I was upon the point of suggesting the propriety of informing their mother that strangers were at the cottage. My father, however, by his looks and manner, seemed to approve of the prevention, as he himself drew the eldest towards him, and by a gentle restriction kept him close by his side.

“At length Theresa entered; a small
F 4 basket

basket hung upon her arm, which she was on the point of hastily opening, in order to distribute the welcome, though scanty provision, when her eye first caught a view of the intruders. In an instant every sense seemed paralyzed; her feet became as if rooted to the earth; she looked first at her husband, then on her children; an expression of joy, far unlike her usual reception, was conspicuous in the countenance of the former, while the latter, with a delight which could not be concealed even by their tears, ran hastily to her embrace, crying out—‘ Oh mama, dear mama, we shall all now be happy; papa will soon get well; nor shall we, he says, be obliged to keep what you have brought us for the whole week, as we may eat it up all to-day, if we please, and have plenty again for to-morrow; how glad we are, for we are very hungry.’

“ In these artless strains did these innocents address their astonished mother, who still remained silent, and gazing upon the
interesting

interesting group, until the voice of her husband recalled her to a sense of the scene before her, who exclaimed—‘ Yes, my dear Theresa, what these dear infants have so incoherently told is true ; in these strangers behold the present preservers of our family, and our assured future benefactors ; I cannot rise to thank them as I ought ; do you perform the duty for me.’ In an instant Theresa, dropping the basket which she had still held in her hand, fell upon her knees, before either my father or myself could prevent her. In this action the children, as if mechanically, followed her example ; nor until she had poured forth at random the effusions prompted by the voice of Nature alone, could we prevail upon her to quit the humble posture which she had assumed. A group more interesting never can be conceived ; and indeed it became painfully affecting.

“ At length the penetrating eye of the invalid perceived the effect of her pious gratitude upon our feelings, and kindly

reminded her, that although life itself would be too short to repay their benefactors, yet that from the benevolence of their dispositions, he was assured they would have a more exalted opinion of that gratitude, if she would blend with it her usual attention to her little family, casting a look, at the same time, at the basket which lay unemptied on the ground. A modest blush suffused her agitated countenance, and addressing us personally for the first time, said—‘ So wonderful are the changes which I have thus suddenly encountered, that I am confident our benefactors will attribute the inattention to that whirlwind of thought which threatened for an instant to deprive me of reason ; fear, doubt, and a numerous train of unaccountable sensations, assailed me by turns ; but when I view (pardon me for repeating the unmerited expressions which she made use of) the figure and countenance of an angel, announcing the end of our misery, all other passions but gratitude vanish. Come then,

then, my children,' continued she, 'enjoy the first meal that this cottage has been witness to for this fortnight past; and you too, my beloved husband, may freely partake of a small present which your late master has sent you.' Saying this, she gave him a bason, which contained some soup, that, from its appearance, seemed well calculated for an invalid; and when I tell you that the whole contents of the basket was easily consumed without overloading the stomach, you may judge how small must have been the allotted portion, when divided into seven days' provision.

"Every motive for a longer continuance at this miserable hut was now completed; we therefore prepared for our departure, leaving to the happy husband the task of detailing the particulars of what passed, and also our future intentions in their favour; and as there was some of the cordial remaining which had before been applied so successfully, we gave it into the hands of Theresa, as a temporary resource until

we could send them something more substantial.

“ Such was my first interview with this interesting family, and it is scarcely necessary for me to add, that every engagement my father promised, and indeed more, was punctually fulfilled.

“ At the earnest intreaties both of the peasant and his wife, a new house was erected near to the spot where the former miserable cottage stood, as the land was his own, and part of it was in a forward state of cultivation. I soon found that Theresa possessed an understanding much superior to the generality of peasants; and her husband, who by proper applications soon recovered the use of his wounded leg, ingratiated himself so much with my father, that he soon became his chief confidant, and was employed by him in concerns that required more than common abilities. Few days passed, particularly in the summer season, that Theresa did not walk over to our retreat, or that I did not pay a visit to her

little farm ; upon this eventful morning I had rambled thither, intending to remain with her a few hours, as I conjectured that she was alone, her husband having been employed upon business which promised to detain him until late in the evening. Upon my arrival at the farm, however, I found that its mistress was gone to the neighbouring village, and that she probably would not return until late. Having therefore rested myself for about an hour, amused by the playful gambols of their youngest infant, who had been left at home under the care of the servant, (for their present establishment not only requires the assistance of one, but can support it without a deviation from prudence), I set off upon my return home.

“ I confess, that while sitting in the small but decent apartment of the farm, I experienced a sensation of dread, very unusual for me to feel, and which I could neither account for, or intirely dismiss from my mind ; I recollected the pertinacity of Madame Steller,

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ler, and the earnestness of her request that I would not leave her on this morning, as she was sure some misfortune would happen. I must premise, that notwithstanding her good qualities, superstition was her prevailing foible, and I discovered that this reluctance for my departure proceeded from a dream; the particulars of which however she would not relate to me. As my father is more free from those prejudices than most men of the age, he had taken the greatest pains to inculcate the same disposition in me. I therefore only laughed at the idea; and although I am sensible that, out of complaisance to Madame Steller, he would have rather wished me to remain at home than otherwise, still he would not interfere in our little contest, lest I should imagine that he also was biassed by it. My usual dress upon these excursions was that worn by the generality of the young female peasantry of a superior class; upon this occasion, however, I omitted to take with me the usual weapons of defence, as it seldom

dom or ever happened that the wild beasts made their appearance in the more fertilized districts, during the summer season, or indeed at any time, except when extreme hunger forced them from their secret recesses in the more mountainous regions. I had proceeded nearly half way upon my return home, when I was tempted to take a view of a distant prospect, which had, in the course of the chacé, frequently attracted my attention ; yet I had never found an opportunity of examining it with that minuteness which its apparent beauty promised to repay with a satisfaction that would most amply compensate for the delay.

“ In order to obtain a more complete and comprehensive view of the object I allude to, I was obliged to leave the direct path, in order to gain the ascent of one of those declivities so frequent in these mountainous districts, and from which no intervening obstruction could conceal any part of its beauties. While employed in the contemplation of a scene so congenial to
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my disposition, and while my mind was revelling in that pure delight which those only who are alive to the magnificent works of Nature can perfectly enjoy, the reverie into which I had fallen, almost unconscious of ought, save those beauties which every instant became more interesting, as they were examined more minutely, was suddenly disturbed by a noise, which, from its sound, appeared at no great distance from me. It seemed the efforts of a man attempting to make his way towards me through the underwood, which was of a sufficient height and thickness to conceal his approach until he came almost close to the spot I had chosen. On any other occasion it is very probable that my alarm would have been trifling, and I should consequently have fallen a martyr to an over security ; my mind, however, notwithstanding all my endeavours to shake it off, was impressed with the solemnity of Madame Steller's address to me, and starting up from the recumbent posture which I had chosen,

I hastened

I hastened to regain the road that led to my own habitation. Before I could accomplish this design, I found that I had ample reason for my terror, as I perceived a person rush from the path I was so eager to gain ; for a moment I flattered myself that I should escape his observation, as he stopped suddenly, throwing his eyes with a minute inquisitiveness all around him, as if to discover the object of his search. But this hope soon evaporated when I beheld him turn towards the direction I was pursuing, and advance with increased speed. I had then a more distinct view of his person, and if I was alarmed before, how much more was that alarm increased, when it became evident that his designs, whatever they might ultimately prove, were of a nature that required concealment, as he wore a mask, which sufficiently prevented any discovery of his features. In addition to this appalling sight, he was armed ; yet, as well as I could judge from the hasty view I took of his person, his costume was quite different

different from that which, I have been told, is universal among the banditti who are reported to inhabit the private recesses of the adjacent mountains. This discovery completed my terror; it was not, however, so much for myself that I was alarmed, but on the account of my father. The enemies, whom I had so repeatedly heard from him had made various attempts to discover his situation, occurred to my recollection, and I immediately conjectured, that, having by his late conduct relaxed from the strict secrecy which he had so long observed, he had awakened the fears of those inveterate disturbers of his happiness, who, doubtless, judged that his openness of conduct was the prelude of his return to power—an event which their conscious iniquity told them would prove the disclosure of their past villainy, as well as the downfall of their future hopes.

“It struck me also, that the directions given to this stranger was not, in the first instance, any attempt against the person of
my

my father, but that their first object was to get possession of mine, as an hostage, if necessary, for their own safety ; for if this could be attained in the secret manner intended, it would answer the purpose of inflicting the most exquisite torture in my father's heart ; and even if their fears of his return into the busy scenes of life were intended to be realized, would, they hoped, effectually prevent him. Such were the ideas suggested by the terror of the moment ; instead, however, of sinking under their weight, they seemed to add strength to my exertions, which the near approach of the terrific object rendered every instant more necessary. Every path, even the most intricate, was well known to me ; I therefore hoped, that, by striking into one, at first in appearance almost impassable, and which contained several windings, I might baffle his pursuit ; I well knew that it would lead me further from home, but as my father was universally beloved by the neighbouring peasantry, I entertained the hopes

hopes of meeting with some of them employed in their usual occupations of wood-cutting, when I made little doubt of escaping from the perils which I had so inadvertently thrown myself into. But these hopes proved fallacious; my pursuer, who soon discovered my tract, gained ground upon me, frequently calling upon me to stop; but his voice, which sounded in my ears more terrific than the howling of the indigenous inhabitants of the mountains, instead of diminishing, seemed to add strength to my exertions. I knew that the main road which led through the forest was at no great distance from the direction in which I was flying. Hope once more revived; but alas! this was upon the point of finally forsaking me, when, at the very instant in which I reached the wished-for tract, I perceived two cavaliers, accompanied by a lady. The result you, gentlemen, are acquainted with, much better than myself; all I recollect is, that, upon perceiving them, I gave a violent scream, when
my

my pursuer darted into the wilds of the forest ; I then sunk exhausted into a state of insensibility, from which your generous assistance recovered me ; and I can only lament that my sudden appearance should have been the cause of separating the party ; but I trust, as the road is sufficiently wide, and free from impediments, that no serious accident will happen to the young lady ; sorry I am, however, to detain her friends from affording her those services which she must probably need."

An explanation here ensued ; and the eldest of the cavaliers assured the fair Alphonsine that she might banish every uneasiness respecting his fair charge, as her horsemanship was fully equal to any peril which she would probably encounter, and her young companion able to protect her to the place at which it was their intention to remain for some days ; he was therefore confident that they would await his arrival, " unless," added he, " my young friend, having placed his fair charge in safety, should

should have the gallantry to retrace his steps, impatient to know the issue of the adventure, of which he beheld only the commencement. As to myself," continued he, "I feel so extremely interested in the history you have related, that I can almost fancy it to be the peculiar ordination of Providence itself that we should so unexpectedly meet, as, notwithstanding the deep veil of disguise with which you have enveloped the events of your past life, it recalls to my recollection the remembrance of one most dear to me, whose unknown fate I have long lamented; nor has a new year passed that has not witnessed my attempt to discover his retreat. Start not, my fair Alphonsine, should the truth be as I suspect, and that it is my happiness to find in the Chevalier De Rottenberg the long-lost——"

He stopped, recollecting, for the first time, that a total stranger to him was present; but recovering from the momentary confusion which his hasty zeal in the fancied

cied recognition had caused, he said—
“ But hold; what the chevalier has so long held sacred, must not be wantonly exposed by his friends; be assured, however, that not even yourself can take a greater interest in his welfare than I feel.”

These assurances calmed the anxiety which the innocent heart of Alphonsine felt, when she found, that in the fulness of her gratitude she had perhaps unguardedly betrayed the author of her being into the hands of his enemies. She wished to have inquired the name of her deliverers, as she was acquainted with those whom her father had often mentioned with pleasure, as his particular friends; but this an innate modesty forbade.

Albert had attended to this conversation in silence; he perceived there was some mystery which perhaps their arrival at the cottage of the Chevalier De Rottenberg would develop. His own situation became extremely hazardous; he had seen his companion frequently scrutinizing his countenance

tenance when he thought himself unobserved, and he pondered upon the words which he had overheard when concealed in his rocky retreat. Some occasional hints, thrown out in the course of conversation, almost convinced him that the lady of whom his present companion had been the escort, was the identical Matilda, of whose person he had, as already related, attempted to get possession, knowing that, in default of the appearance of the young Prince Rodolphus, of whom no tidings had transpired, since he was snatched from certain destruction, and conveyed far from the walls of Clagenfurth, she was the undoubted heiress to the principality. Yet one doubt still obtruded; if this was Matilda, how could he reconcile the story of her deliverance from his emissaries, which every circumstance convinced him was effected by one of the banditti? and he was too well acquainted with their rules, not to know the treatment those of the female sex were destined to experience, whom their ill fortune threw
into

into their power. Could an indifferent observer have scrutinized the countenance of Albert, during the rapid succession of these ideas, he would have found it an enigma not easily to be unravelled. A fugitive, a proscribed alien, he yet entertained the hopes of rioting in the spoils of love, by the possession of the unfortunate Adeline; while, on the other hand, ambition, and the prospect of restoring his lost honour and consequence, by fulfilling that part of the fatal prophecy respecting the restoration of the legal heir to the throne of Clagenfurth, pointed out the young Matilda as the proper object of his pursuit.

At the conclusion of the remarks made by the elder chevalier, a total silence succeeded. The minds of each seemed deeply engaged in revolving the unexpected events of the few last hours, which had succeeded each other with such rapidity as to leave little room for the suggestion of that caution which it was so evidently the interest both of Albert and Alphonsine

to observe. When reflection indeed regained its sway, the latter, notwithstanding the cheering assurances of her elder protector, felt, that by an eager and overstrained gratitude for her deliverance from a danger which her fertile fancy led her to believe included those most dear to her, she had perhaps been the principal occasion of involving them in that very predicament she sought to avoid. The thought was agony; yet no plan of preventing their attendance upon her to the cottage of her father presented itself to her imagination. She had herself requested their services, nor could she now dispense with them, without being subject to the charge, either of caprice, or the most glaring inconsistency, if not of suspicions more injurious to her character.

Albert, wrapt up in meditations upon his own concerns, did not perceive the contrariety of emotions by which the mind of Alphonsine was agitated; but his companion had been a more accurate observer.

observer. Gladly would he have given immediate relief to a heart whose very errors proceeded solely from the noblest principle—gratitude; but he was constrained to silence by the presence of a third person, of whom, upon a closer examination, which he had taken every private opportunity of making, he did not entertain the most favourable opinion; and indeed he would have rather considered him as an associate with the unknown intruder upon Alphonsine's walks, than her protector from his insults.

It has been already remarked, that Albert, in order more effectually to elude his enemies, had disguised his naturally noble form, under the semblance of comparative wretchedness; and the arms which he carried with him, as his means of defence, served to heighten the *tout ensemble* of his appearance. Still there was a beam of majesty which would sometimes disclose itself through every bar; and although the memory of his companion was not

sufficiently retentive to recollect his person, yet he felt convinced that the meanness of his present accoutrements was assumed only for some particular purpose. This conviction put him more upon his guard, and served to determine his conduct towards Alphonsine, although he lamented the urgency of the case, which prevented him from making a disclosure that would have effectually banished those apprehensions which her late formed reflection caused her to imbibe.

They had arrived within a short distance from the retreat of the Chevalier De Rottenberg, when the sound of several voices, calling loudly upon the name of Alphonsine, struck their ears; and in a few minutes, the husband of Theresa, who had returned from executing the commission with which he had been charged much sooner than he expected, appeared hastening down the path, followed by the Chevalier De Rottenberg. In an instant Alphonsine threw herself into the arms of
her

her father, and fainted. The confusion this caused, together with the unexpected pleasure of finding his daughter restored safe to his arms (as reports of a most dreadful nature were circulated respecting her, and which gained additional credence by the return of the peasant, who had heard of her having been at his farm, and of her departure from thence), prevented the Chevalier from immediately noticing the persons by whom she was accompanied. But Albert no sooner perceived the father of Alphonsine, whom, but the moment before, he had assisted in supporting, than he rushed, with an impetuosity bordering upon insanity, into the most intricate part of the forest. The suddenness, however, of his departure caused De Rottenberg, who had been bending over the inanimate form of his daughter, in order to catch the first moments of returning sense, to look up; nor could Albert, notwithstanding all his exertion, proceed so far ere he escaped observation,

but that the former caught a distinct view of features indelibly impressed upon his memory, and in a voice agitated by a thousand contending passions, he hastily exclaimed, "GRACIOUS POWERS! ALBERT HERE!" This exclamation aroused the attention of the elder chevalier, who, perceiving a sufficient number of attendants employed in the recovery of Alphonsine, for Madàme Steller, with the female part of their household, had joined them, had hitherto kept at such a distance, as not to be recognized by De Rottenberg. Hearing, however, the exclamation uttered by the father of Alphonsine, he subjoined, in a tone of peremptory command, "Pursue the tyrant with the utmost speed, and bring him, alive or dead, to the cottage of the Chevalier." Alphonsine had by this nearly recovered, when a new surprise in some measure called off her attention, as her father, starting at the well-known voice of the stranger, gazed upon him for an instant, as if incredulous of the reality.

The

The next moment saw him encircled in his arms.

The city of Clagenfurth soon regained a state of tranquillity, to which it had been a total stranger during the usurpation of Albert. The entrance of the Chevalier D'Armfeldt within its walls, who was accompanied by the Count Von Werdenberg, Theodore, and Berthold, seemed more like the arrival of friends than conquerors; and it was with the most heartfelt satisfaction that they found, upon the strictest examination, that very few of the citizens had fallen in the contest, the chief slaughter having been confined to some mercenaries, and to the hereditary vassals of the fugitive Prince, and even of these an inconsiderable number became the victims of their attachment; for, as they soon perceived that his cause was hopeless, and that the troops within the walls waited only for a fair opportunity of joining their fellow-soldiers on the outside, they prudently escaped the dread of an assault,

which it was evident would be favoured by the citizens at large, and consequently involve them, as belonging more peculiarly to Albert, in a certain massacre, by rendering themselves voluntary prisoners, as soon as the regulations for the interior government both of the capital and the whole principality, which soon followed the example of their fellow-subjects, were regulated. A consultation was held to consider of the steps necessary to be taken upon this sudden turn of affairs. It was now that D'Armfeldt was first made acquainted with the surreptitious mode by which the usurper had caused the removal of the Princess Adeline from the convent of St. Veil; but his uneasiness was rather alleviated by the intelligence which he received from Berthold, who as yet was only known to him as an intimate friend of the Count Von Werdenberg and Theodore de Mountfort, and accordingly treated by him with the attention which he thought due to the rank of those noblemen. Adeline, it may be recollected,

collected, was obliged to take shelter in a solitary hut. The character of its inhabitants had been justly defined, in the suspicion both of the Princess and Martuccio ; and it was solely owing to the very strict orders which had been given to them by their captain, that the latter escaped in safety with his prize. Had the resolution of the Princess, which she at one time determined upon, of discovering her rank, and claiming the protection of the cottagers, fortunately been persevered in, she would have escaped the persecutions which awaited her, and the betrayer of injured innocence would have suffered a punishment due, not only to his present crime, but for a long catalogue of offences, the least of which deserved the utmost rigour that the sternness of justice could inflict. Sebastian no sooner entered the cottage than his piercing eye, always accustomed to scrutinize strangers, gazed on Martuccio, and notwithstanding the alteration which time, assisted by art,

had made upon his features, he instantly recollected both the form and countenance of a former acquaintance. This recognition, together with the observations which he made upon the elegant appearance, even though disguised, of his female companion, convinced him that his employment, of whatsoever nature it might be, was of a tendency in which villainy bore the greatest share. The scenes to which he had been himself privy some years back, justified him in the suspicion ; and it was this that occasioned the private conference between him and his brother-in-law, as to the measures which they should pursue. Obedience to the orders which they had previously received was however paramount to every other consideration, and they reluctantly left the female to her fate. Certain it is, however, that had they known it was the Princess Adeline who was thus the victim of a villain, they would have risked the displeasure of their captain, and their lives forfeited by
their

their disobedience; satisfied that for the act of apparent rebellion against those laws which held their society together by an indissoluble bond, they would, upon an appeal to the generosity of the whole, not only have been pardoned, but applauded. Fate, however, ordained that their allegiance should not be put to the test; but scarcely had a few hours passed, after the departure of Adeline and Martuccio from the cottage in the forest, than one of the messengers sent by Berthold from the monastery, to collect his forces together at the rendezvous fixed upon, arrived in great haste, to summon their attendance. From him they learned the history which had been related by the wounded monk, and they now blamed themselves most severely for their hesitation in performing an action which their consciences whispered was meritorious. The intelligence, however, came too late for any chance of success in a pursuit; added to which, the time allotted them to

join their associates would not permit the attempt. Taking, therefore, an hasty leave of Marian, they used every expedition to join their captain as soon as possible ; as, from various sources, although such as they could not place any reliance upon, they in part conjectured the enterprise in which their companions were, as usual, to take a conspicuous share ; and from some hints which had escaped the messenger, the knowledge which they had casually obtained of the Princess Adeline would, they judged, be esteemed of no trivial consequence by their captain. Immediately, therefore, upon their arrival at the destined spot, they required an audience of him upon matters of importance. Berthold was at that time sitting with his two friends, consulting upon some measures which were thought it might be necessary to pursue. He however immediately made an apology for so abruptly breaking in upon their conversation, by an attention to business of his own ; adding, as an excuse, which

which he trusted would be accepted, that it had been his constant practice, ever since he had taken the command, to give instant audience whenever any intelligence was brought, lest by the delay, even of a moment, he might be prevented either from guarding the security of his followers, or, perhaps, of mitigating the extremity of distress.

A look, sufficiently expressive of the high admiration in which they held his sentiments, was the signal for the admittance of Bernardo and Sebastian. Perceiving that strangers were present, they indicated that their tale required privacy ; but Berthold, confident that they had not been guilty of any outrage which would tend to criminate them in the opinion of his friends, commanded them to speak out, as he had no secrets which he should hesitate to entrust to those with whom he was in company. Sebastian then related the transactions at the cottage, and confessed the great restraint which he put upon his inclination,

clination, to prevent his swerving from that obedience which he owed to the commands of his captain. During the narrative, both Theodore and the Count, although they had heard the tale, as far as the information of the wounded monk could give them, exhibited symptoms of the greatest agitation ; while the captain, pleased with their conduct, could not forbear noticing their implicit obedience, by cordially shaking them by the hand, and promising an immediate rise in the troop to which they were peculiarly attached ; adding, at the same time, that if they had, on an occasion of so peculiar a nature, swerved from the duty imposed upon them by the general rules of the society, yet, for the sake of future discipline, he should have been obliged to have subjected them to a trial, although his voice would have been the first to have pronounced an honourable acquittal. The two brothers then left the tent, not however before Sebastian had been commanded to return thither at midnight,

night, in order to undertake a secret commission.

It had been the intention of the Chevalier to have proposed the Princess Adeline as their reigning Queen, until such time as Rodolphus either returned, or his death was authenticated. Her absence at this particular time was distressing to all parties, as it made the necessary arrangements for fixing the government upon a firm and solid foundation much more difficult. The secret respecting Matilda was known but to few, nor had it yet been made known by the Chevalier to Theodore or his other friends ; yet, from the first moment of the discovery, the plans of D'Armfeldt to secure the hereditary possessions, in case of the demise of the young Rodolphus, were such as disclosed his abilities as a statesman, and proved that he had conquered, not for an aggrandizement to himself alone, but for the ultimate happiness and benefit of the principality at large. The Count Von Werdenberg made no secret of the designs entertained

entertained for the future establishment of Matilda. The intelligence appeared to give so great a satisfaction to D'Armfeldt, as to excite no small surprise in his friends, who could not conceive why an event in which the Chevalier apparently possessed no superior interest, should be received by him with a pleasure he took no pains to conceal. Indeed, so urgent was he upon the occasion, as even to propose a speedy celebration of their marriage; and that during the absence both of Adeline and Rodolphus, Theodore and Matilda should take upon them the reins of government—a measure which he was confident would meet with the cordial approbation of the principality at large, particularly when they were made acquainted with the birth of Matilda, and saw the supposed last surviving branch of their late beloved Prince's family united with the brother of the injured Adeline.

But although the Count Werdenberg was well aware of the facility with which such a
plan

plan might be effected, yet there were many reasons, and those of considerable weight, which urged him to defer the completion of it. These he made no scruple of mentioning. One, and indeed the principal, was painted in a manner so clear and perspicuous, that even Theodore himself, although it militated against an early completion of his happiness, could not avoid perceiving the justice of it; and the Chevalier confessed his surprise, that an inference so obvious as the one suggested by the Count should have escaped his penetration. "Remember," said the veteran, "that although we are ourselves conscious of the purity of our intentions, yet the world, judging from appearances only, will be too apt to consider that conduct as the offspring of ambition, which in reality is intended solely for the advantage of all parties; and even the Princess Adeline herself, whose feelings as a mother would naturally supersede those of a sister, would, I doubt not, entertain

entertain the strongest fears, not only for the ultimate succession of her beloved Rodolphus, but, if he still is in existence, perhaps of his life also ; as experience has furnished us with so many dreadful instances of men whose former conduct has been a brilliant example for the imitation of others, yet when the sweets of power have once been felt, it has become so interwoven with their very existence, as to seem habitual : nor could that virtue which had once bowed before the more glittering shrine of ambition, scarcely ever be recalled to the practice of justice and honour : but although I would pledge my own life, that, was the present proposal to be adopted, no injury would accrue to the interests of the legal claimants, still let us, to whom the people look up with anxiety for the settlement of their future government, steer clear even of suspicion ; and it is to you, Chevalier (addressing D'Armfeldt), that my wishes point, as the head of a regency, to be
formed.

formed from those men whose abilities and integrity are the surest pleas for the purity of their actions."

To this address, so totally unexpected, the Chevalier made a suitable answer, and would willingly have declined the distinction; but the Count so clearly demonstrated to him that he was the person most proper upon the occasion, as he was known to be possessed of the affection of the army, and no less so of the citizens at large, that D'Armfeldt at length consented, making it however a preliminary that he would occasionally assist him with his advice. "And now," continued he, "let me return you my sincerest thanks for having pointed out the impropriety of my first proposal—an impropriety which will appear more glaring, when, which indeed must have been the case ere the marriage with Theodore took place, I withdraw the veil which has hitherto concealed some part of the mystery attendant upon the birth of Matilda."

"How!" exclaimed Theodore, "is she
not

not the daughter of the late Prince of Clagenfurth?"

"She is," replied D'Armfeldt; "but her mother——"

The impatient Theodore, whose love conjured up a thousand fears lest his adored Matilda should prove of a birth which might induce the Count Von Werdenberg to waver in his intentions, again interrupted the Chevalier, and while his countenance expressed the feelings which at that moment agitated his mind, the question, "Know you the mother of Matilda?" passed his lips; at the same time adding, "How happy will this discovery make——" He paused; but with a sigh, he found it impossible to restrain, instantly subjoined "Matilda!"

The Count and Chevalier readily penetrated the thoughts of Theodore. The former indeed was rather surprised that D'Armfeldt, whom he had never heard mentioned as having been in the confidence of the late Prince, should be in the possession of a secret unknown, it was believed,

to all his most intimate friends. He therefore in some measure shared the impatience of the young lover. The Chevalier, however, did not permit them to remain long in suspense, but with a feeling he could not suppress, said, " My noble friends, ere I discover what I believe only one being except myself, who is now no more, but whose name authenticates the certificate of marriage, ever was made acquainted with, I must premise, that the family of her mother is of a rank which the proudest house in the imperial dominions would have no reason to blush at forming an alliance with, although this circumstance was never known to the late Prince of Clagenfurth; but misfortunes, and the intrigues of some powerful enemies, have reduced them from that station in society which they had filled with so much credit to themselves. At some future time the relation of past events may amuse. The story is long, and in many respects interesting. Suffice it at present
to

to know, that the mother of Matilda was the sister of your friend."

"Of who?" exclaimed both the Count and Theodore, in one breath, as if they did not understand his meaning.

"Of myself," replied the Chevalier.

When the astonishment at so unexpected a disclosure had subsided, both the Count and Theodore cordially congratulated him upon having a niece who would add lustre to the family from which she sprung; and Theodore felt so conscious that the Chevalier had an undoubted right in the disposal of his niece, that notwithstanding his prior wishes for their immediate marriage had so lately been made, he thought it his duty to ask a formal consent. To this request the Chevalier replied by referring him to the Count Von Werdenberg, saying, "The Count alone must determine." Before Theodore could address him, his noble relation, taking his hand most affectionately, replied, with a smile, "Henry Von Werdenberg will never

never check an affection commenced upon motives the most honourable, and whose object is scarce less dear to him than would my sainted Zulima have been, had fate permitted her existence."

The mention of his beloved daughter caused the silent tear to steal down the cheek of the veteran. The impression, however, was momentary, and gave place to the pure joy and hilarity which, during the disclosure of the important event just mentioned, had, from an anxiety respecting the manner in which the intelligence might be received, experienced a momentary check.

During the whole of this conversation, it was remarked that Berthold had kept a strict silence; neither did the disclosure made by the Chevalier D'Armsfeldt cause him to express any symptoms of surprise. The Count and Theodore both perceived the singularity of his conduct, as in general he freely entered into discussions of a political nature. The reason, however,
which

which in their own minds they assigned for his taciturnity, was, that being unknown to D'Armfeldt, otherwise than as a friend of the Count's, he did not think it proper to interfere upon a subject in which he was not supposed to have any interest.

A pause in the conversation having ensued, Berthold revived it by observing that he had listened with the utmost attention, and indeed satisfaction, to the noble and disinterested sentiments he had heard—sentiments which, while they did honour to the individuals, promised to ensure the happiness of the people at large. To him they gave an additional pleasure, as he perceived the time was arrived when information of greater moment than what had just transpired, might, both with propriety and safety, be promulgated. “Neither,” continued he, “let my veracity be doubted, when I assert that your sovereign lives, in safety, and in health.”

A shout of joy fully expressed the feelings of his friends at intelligence so long an object

ject of their most anxious wishes. Question succeeded to question ; but Berthold gave such cogent reasons why the assurance of the safety only of the young Rodolphus should be made known to the people in general, until certain events took place, that a ready acquiescence in them ensued.

The news that their young Prince was in existence, and that he would, at a proper time, return to take upon himself the government, was soon spread over the city, and caused the greatest rejoicings; nor were its inhabitants little less pleased when they were informed, that until that period arrived, their friend and favourite, the Chevalier D'Armfeldt, would assume the title and power of regent.

Every thing which had detained the three friends, Theodore, Berthold, and Von Wendenberg, being finally arranged, they prepared for their departure from Clagenfurth; but the earnest entreaties of the Chevalier D'Armfeldt prevailed upon the latter to remain some time longer, which, upon

condition that Matilda should leave the hermitage, and with a sufficient escort to prevent any accidental attack, should repair to Clagenfurth, was readily agreed to.

Theodore eagerly pledged himself for her safety, and, impatient to see the object of his adoration, from whom, in his estimation, he had been separated an age, urged Berthold to enter upon their journey, who, after a long consultation with the Count, was also anxious to depart, and who had expressed his intention of travelling with him as far as the hermitage. Before, however, Berthold left Clagenfurth, he, with the consent of the Count, freely discovered his present situation to the Chevalier, referring him to the former for a full explanation of his conduct.

We must now leave our heroes to prepare for the execution of those designs which they meditated, and recall the attention to the Princess Adeline, the discovery indeed of whom was the principal object that Berthold had in view ; and in consequence of
that

that design, private instructions were given to Sebastian, who was to retail them to those of his associates selected by the captain for this particular enterprise.

No sooner was Roberto entirely freed from the superiority assumed by Martuccio during his unwelcome residence in the Castle, than Adeline, as has been related, was permitted to range over the extensive gardens contained within its spacious walls; still, either his wife or daughter, and sometimes even in person Roberto himself would constantly attend her. It was impossible that this circumstance could pass unnoticed by the Princess, who, although she enjoyed comparative happiness in the permission of such an extent of freedom, as upon her first entrance within the walls she despaired of ever obtaining, could not sometimes avoid forming the wish of indulging, unnoticed by observation, in those reveries which, although they reverted to scenes of long-lost happiness, seemed rather to tranquillize than agitate her mind.

The penetration, however, of Roberto was not to be deceived. He was satisfied that all his endeavours failed in their wished-for object, of rendering the situation of the Princess as little irksome as his duty to his chief permitted him. Accident, however, furnished an opportunity of overhearing part of a conversation between her and Agnes, from the tenor of which he judged that he had made a discovery of the cause which he had so frequently observed would, even in their most familiar moments, cloud the brow of his interesting charge.

Whenever she could be spared from the necessary business of the household, Agnes would frequently repair to the apartments of Adeline, with the benevolent intention of dispersing, by her presence and cheerfulness, that anxiety which she was fearful would, by a too great indulgence of retirement within the walls of the Castle, in time prove of serious injury to her health. There she was certain of receiving the most sincere and affectionate welcome. Indeed so
greatly

greatly had she ingratiated herself with that amiable sufferer, by a display of virtues which, unfettered by affectation, owed their origin to the purity of the heart alone, that the Princess contemplated her almost with the eye of a parent. Various topics were discussed between them, with a degree of freedom which a stranger might attribute to a tie of a nature superior to friendship.

If the weather permitted, Agnes generally succeeded in prevailing upon Adeline either to court the refreshing breezes of those heights which commanded an extensive prospect over the adjacent country, or else the cooler retreats which abounded throughout the gardens, and afforded a pleasing security from the piercing sultriness of an Italian atmosphere. While the two friends were enjoying themselves in one of these delicious recesses, Roberto, who, since the arrival of the Princess, had felt a satisfaction in keeping those walks which she seemed the most delighted with in proper order, had, while examining that part of the premises but a few days before, perceived the

overgrown luxuriance of some shrubs, which, if too long neglected, would materially injure the picturesque scenery which constituted its principal beauty. He had therefore allotted that morning for the performance of this necessary improvement, totally ignorant that any of the inhabitants of the Castle had left it. While busily employed in this service, in which he took an extreme delight, he overheard the voices of females; and, desisting a few moments from his work, he soon discovered that Adeline and his daughter Agnes were in a serious conversation in the neighbouring recess; but although certain that his vicinity to them could not be discovered, yet his innate sense of propriety, together with his conviction that the Princess possessed too much honour to endeavour to seduce his daughter from the obedience which was due to a parent, prompted him to retire—a resolution which he was about putting in practice, when he overheard distinctly a part of the conversation. The tenor of it appeared, from the tremulous voice of Adeline, to be
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of an interesting nature ; and he hastily conceived that he might possibly then have an opportunity of discovering the means of promoting the comforts of his fair charge, especially as by the mention of the Castle, he conjectured that Adeline was confiding some intelligence of consequence to her future felicity, during her residence in it, to his daughter. To obtain this knowledge, by questioning Agnes respecting it, he knew would be useless, as, if it militated not against the duty she owed her parents, no power would ever force her to divulge a secret committed to her in confidence. He determined, therefore, to take the advantage offered him, conscious that his intentions were of a nature the most pure, and could defy the strictures of the most rigid. He accordingly drew as near as possible, without the hazard of detection, to the recess ; and from the sound of their voices, found that he had chosen a spot so near as to enable him to hear with the greatest distinction ; and, to an observation made by Agnes, the first part of which he lost, the Princess replied—

“Such, Agnes, is the principle which, during my life, I have invariably laid down as the basis of my actions; and although I acknowledge, that by following a more worldly policy, I might have escaped many of those misfortunes, which if they have not immediately contributed to, have undoubtedly rendered my situation much more unpleasant, yet a consciousness that religion and morality have been the handmaids of my actions, enables me to endure with patient fortitude so dreadful a reverse of fortune.”

“I freely acknowledge the rectitude of those principles,” replied Agnes; “but although I at present pride myself upon the possession of a strength of mind much superior to the situation in which fortune has placed me, and my heart tells me that nothing could force me to a dereliction from the duty which I owe to my parents, yet history, and indeed daily experience, shews how weak the firmest resolutions prove, when opposed to the seducing prospect of glittering ambition.”

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“The very doubts,” rejoined Adeline, “which you express, are, my dear Agnes, your surest guardians. They, by constantly watching and attending to every action of your life, will give you such timely notice of the danger that threatens you, that the victory over the temptation by which you are assailed will be easy. It is true, that instances have, and may occur again, where a deviation from this strictness, though never entirely to be defended, may admit of some palliation. Yet although this may be granted, it is no argument for the propriety of its adoption. But the subject has engaged us in a deeper controversy than, I believe, either of us intended ; nor do I mean to assert, that, in my own situation, was chance to offer me the means of escaping from a man whom I have every reason to fear, that I would not take advantage of it ; but it must be to chance alone that I would be indebted, not to bribery or persuasion upon my part, or to the treachery of those who were employed to take the charge of me.

The first I should despise as base, the last as an act of the most consummate villainy ; nor could I put any confidence in a man who first endeavoured to obtain it by the greatest breach of it."

" Possessed of such a patient determination, I confess," said Agnes, " that I feel some little degree of surprise, that, during our frequent excursions, a kind of impatient listlessness seems to agitate your mind, as if it was roving after something which eluded its pursuit."

" I did not know," returned the Princess, with a smile, " that you was so accurate an observer. I see I must keep my looks in more obedience for the future ; for, as I cannot assign any particular reason, I should not wish my friends, for such I may truly call the inhabitants of this Castle, to fancy that I was in the least dissatisfied with their kind endeavours to amuse ; and I am only sorry that imperious duty obliges Roberto to put himself to great trouble and inconvenience, in his constant attendance upon me,

me, which I fear frequently calls him off from concerns of more importance: but I can assure you, my dear Agnes," continued Adeline, with a laugh, "that I feel my chains sit so easy upon me at present, that no very extraordinary caution is necessary to detain me a prisoner.—No, Agnes," added the Princess, in a more serious tone, "here will I remain, until released by the exertions of my family, or the remorse of Albert; for even was my escape possible, the thought that your benevolent father, even though innocent, might be suspected of conniving, if not assisting at it, and consequently suffer under the exasperated power of his chief, would render liberty itself a curse, instead of a blessing."

With an attention bordering upon admiration, Roberto listened to the generous and noble sentiments expressed by Adeline. He was sensible that they were the genuine effusions of her mind, uttered by the impulse of the moment, as it was impossible that she could know that he was an unob-

served auditor. With the utmost silence he retreated from his place of concealment, firmly resolved to put that confidence in the Princess which the rectitude of her ideas seemed to demand. For some time he wavered whether or not he should tacitly permit this liberty, or, requesting an audience, should offer it, as a merited tribute, to the sense he entertained of those honourable principles which actuated every moment of her existence. If he pursued the latter plan, he was fearful lest she might suspect him of the meanness of being intentionally a secret witness of her private conversations with Agnes ; and if he adopted the first idea, he might lose what little merit was attached to his generosity, as the Princess would not probably perceive the indulgence he wished she would avail herself of ; or, if she did, might hesitate to enjoy it. After maturely canvassing the subject, Roberto determined, as his conscience freely acquitted him of an intention of intruding upon her privacy, so as to overhear

her discourse, personally to offer the Princess the uncontrouled liberty of the Castle domains.

The morning subsequent to the conversation with Agnes, as the Princess sat ruminating upon the dreary prospects which awaited her, she was aroused from her reverie by a message from Roberto, requesting, when most convenient, an audience. Although rather surprised, having lately had a conversation of some length with him, she immediately signified an acquiescence. During the intervening time, her mind floated in uncertainty as to the purport of his visit; nor was it free from anxiety, as she concluded, from the suddenness of the request, that he had at last received some orders from Albert, which he thought it his duty to communicate as soon as possible. That noble pride, which had been her support through all her misfortunes, did not forsake her upon this occasion; and she prepared herself to receive the intelligence, of whatsoever nature it might

might be, with dignity and resolution. The entrance, however, of Roberto dissipated her fears; as his countenance wore no marks that could indicate his being the bearer of any intelligence that could tend to distress her. Requesting him to be seated, a distinction which she always insisted upon, she asked whether he came to announce any intelligence respecting his chief; adding, "Whatever he may decree, he will find that a branch of the family of De Mountfort, though a female, will not disgrace, by an ill-timed timidity, the race from whence she springs; nor shall Albert triumph over the Princess of Clagenfurth but in death. Let not, then, Roberto, a false delicacy prevent your delivering any orders, however harsh, that your chief commands. Well I know, that if unjust, though your lips may express them, your heart revolts at the necessity of enforcing them. From me, so much am I indebted to your generosity, you shall receive no difficulty in their execution, confident that you will
endeavour

endeavour to ameliorate, rather than embitter my destiny."

Roberto perceiving that the mind of Adeline was so prepossessed that he was the bearer of unpleasant news from Albert, would have interrupted her during her address to him : but the solemn and energetic manner in which she expressed herself prevented an interruption. Seizing, however, the first moment of a pause, he assured her, that she had entirely mistaken his motive for requesting an audience. " Indeed," Madame, continued he, " it surprises me much that no intelligence should have arrived, either from Albert or Martuccio ; and I must confess that I dread some fatal accident has happened to the former ; for although he is, unjustly, your persecutor, still he is one to whom I owe every duty, not only as my chief, but as a man, as to him I am indebted for my life, even at the imminent danger of his own. With such ties, your generous mind will readily acknowledge that he claims my utmost regard,

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and I own my fears for his welfare cause me many uneasy moments; but, though attached to my chief, still I respect the cause of virtue, and it was to prove the sincerity of the opinion in which I hold that of the Princess of Clagenfurth, that I have now intruded upon her privacy."

Roberto paused, as if irresolute in what manner he should proceed. This did not escape the notice of the Princess, who, though at a loss to guess the tenor of such a conversation, remarked, "that during her residence in the Castle, since it had been under his command, she had received so many pointed marks of attention, both from himself and his whole family, that confinement was scarcely more than nominal; nor should she ever forget the endeavours of all to render her every convenience which their duty would admit of."

"Pardon me, Madame," replied Roberto, "if a too conscientious discharge of that duty has hitherto prevented my paying that homage to honour which is so conspicuous
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a character in the Princess of Clagenfurth. The fears of my chief, or, as I rather suspect, of his minion, Martuccio, suggested the order, that notwithstanding the apparent liberty which was to be granted you, a constant spy should be placed upon all your actions. While Martuccio remained here, the order was obeyed with the utmost rigour, though, I believe, unperceived by you ; since his departure, although it has not been entirely omitted, still it has been relaxed in a considerable degree. The idea has always been irksome to me, and the fear lest you should perceive the ungenerous artifice, and thereby justly suspect the integrity of those whose earnest wish was to serve you, determined me to acquaint you with the fact, and at the same time to announce, that from this instant, you may consider yourself as the free and untrouled mistress of your actions, giving me your word, that you will not endeavour voluntarily to escape from hence without my knowledge."

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If Adeline was surprised at the beginning of this address, how much more was she at its conclusion ! For although the mind of the Princess was naturally endowed with every noble sentiment that could adorn human nature, yet born and educated in the highest seminary of aristocracy, she had been early taught that true nobility of soul was inherent only in those of a higher station ; while such whom fate ordained should be born of a race deemed inferior were scarcely allowed the possession of sense, more than was sufficient to understand the duties of obedience. It is true, her generous mind revolted at the thought ; yet, as impressions imbibed at the period when the rays of reason first illumine the understanding are not easily to be eradicated, even by experience, it would sometimes revert to the original system it had formed ; and, unfortunately, she had so often found that idea to be founded in justice, as to stagger, if not totally silence, the more liberal sentiments which she wished to cultivate.

tivate. Pleased that in Roberto she beheld the refutation of a system so invidious to the rights of human nature, a satisfaction which she could not conceal illumined the countenance of Adeline ; and with a grace peculiar to herself, she thanked him for the flattering testimony which he had paid to her integrity, and most readily gave him the requested assurance.

Mutually pleased with each other, Roberto took his leave ; and although the Princess had scarcely experienced a deprivation of liberty, still she felt an innate satisfaction at the confidence placed in her, a confidence which she was fully determined never to forfeit.

A few days subsequent to this event, the Princess, who had never extended her walk to the northern extremity of the Castle, almost imperceptibly found herself at an angle, from whence a path appeared to meander round that part of the extensive domains. It was evidently disused, at least it was not subject to any frequent intrusion,

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as the branches of trees, luxuriantly spreading across it in various wild directions, seemed almost to forbid any attempt of penetrating its recess. This part had been considered so well secured by nature, as to render sentinels unnecessary, so that it had been apparently deserted for many years. The scene around bordered upon that terrific beauty which so frequently strikes the admiring traveller, while passing the Alpine mountains, with rapture intermixed with horror. Rocks, frowning destruction upon the prostrate vale beneath, towered with majestic grandeur in height, inaccessible to all, except the wild chamois, or adventurous goat, that seemed fearlessly to bound over their craggy surfaces, unconscious of the dangers which their intrepidity often provoked. One instance of this kind arrested the attention of Adeline, while gazing on the scene before her. Casting her eyes from the wide expanse of ocean, by which the Castle was bordered upon this side, to the rocks which
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curbed the fury of its waves, she beheld a solitary goat browsing upon the extremity of one of the projections which extended over the water, and seemed as if it formed the canopy of a cavern beneath it. The mind of the Princess instinctively shuddered at the view, and ere it could recover its first impression, the fragile substance slipped from beneath the feet of the adventurous animal, and he fell, bounding from rock to rock, until the friendly waves afforded the wished-for period of its existence. A shriek involuntarily escaped from the lips of the Princess. It seemed repeated; and terror for an instant obtaining an ascendancy over her resolution, she hastily retreated from the spot. A moment's reflection, however, convinced her of the weakness which she had given way to, as her better reason suggested that the repetition of the shriek was merely the echo of her own voice, which reverberating through the hollows of the surrounding precipices, had caused the involuntary sound. Thus convinced, she determined to return to the place

place from which she had so hastily retreated. Impelled by an irresistible curiosity to examine the northern parts of the Castle, she had frequently hinted to Agnes her wish to wander through the whole extent of buildings ; but as she perceived that the proposition was constantly evaded, she declined pressing it. The discovery which she had now made, however, prompted her to attempt an entrance into that part from the outside, not doubting but that she should find some spot from which she could easily obtain her wish ; nor did she hesitate to gratify her curiosity from any false delicacy towards Roberto or his family, as she naturally concluded, that if any peculiar reasons existed why that part of the premises should be kept sacred from intrusion, the former would have pointedly mentioned it, when he so generously extended her the liberty of ranging over the whole domains. Fear for her personal safety never entered her ideas, as, during her whole residence, and the various excursions which she had made round the premises, she had
never

never encountered any human being except those upon duty at the Castle, and these she now considered as her protectors, rather than as objects of terror.

The sun had just reached the meridian; and it being the height of summer, she doubted not of concluding her purposed examination long before its lessening beams gave warning of the approach of night. It was with the utmost difficulty that she penetrated the path which she had first discovered. Perseverance, however, at length accomplished her wishes; and she found herself beneath one of the turrets that originally constituted part of the defences against the attack of an enemy. Although it had been long neglected, it still maintained a formidable appearance; neither could the Princess perceive any opening by which she could penetrate the interior. However, as she had ventured so far, she determined not to abandon her object without a more careful examination.

While Adeline thus found her way
through

through obstacles which, with all her perseverance, she could with difficulty overcome, fatigue obliged her sometimes to pause from those exertions requisite on such an occasion. During one of these relaxations, it suddenly occurred to her recollection, that, some time before, when a general conversation, relative to the Castle and its appendages, took place, Roberto had mentioned a circumstance, the reality of which was at the time universally believed by the neighbouring peasantry, none of whom could be induced, for a length of time, to approach the northern scite of the building ; and, indeed, many were of opinion, that this report was the sole reason why the Castle had been so long neglected and abandoned by its chief, especially as it was in every respect so well calculated for the residence of a powerful baron, who wished to keep the surrounding country in awe. This circumstance, trivial as it appeared to the Princess at the time of its relation, who treated it merely as the
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effect of superstition, now crossed her ideas; and while contemplating the scene around her, so arrested her attention, as even to cause some impression upon a mind hitherto unassailable to feminine weakness. The more she gazed upon the vast expanse of building that opened itself to her view, the more she felt her courage decrease; and she hesitated whether or not she should venture to proceed, or, by returning to the inhabited part of the Castle, inform Roberto of her wishes, and request his attendance.

While wavering in this state of irresolution, she happened to cast her eyes upon a part of the building which projected a considerable degree forwarder than the remainder of the walls. A window, of a size superior to the others, seemed to announce that it appertained to the principal room belonging to that quarter of the Castle, and she thought, that by advancing to an eminence, at no great distance from the spot where she then was, and to attain which

appeared a labour of no great difficulty, she should be able to catch some view of the interior. Impelled, therefore, by the prospect of obtaining some gratification of her curiosity, the timidity by which her mind had been temporally assailed, instantly vanished.

The difficulty, however, which she experienced in reaching the intended spot of observation, was far greater than she had imagined, as the intervening ground was so totally covered with thick underwood, interwoven with the high grass, as to render the approach to it almost impervious. Neither was she aware of the dangers by which, in other respects, she was surrounded, every step that she advanced out of the beaten tract. Several deep pits, concealed by the long grass and wide-spreading briars, threatened inevitable destruction, not only by the chance of falling into them, but also that they were the retreat of a venomous race of serpents, which infested that quarter. Happily for the Princess, she was
ignorant

ignorant of these tremendous objects of destruction, and Fortune paid a just tribute to her virtue, by conducting her in safety through them. The sun, as if to gratify her curiosity, shone directly upon her window, which was nearly upon a level with the place she had chosen; and so favourably disposed were its beams, that they illumined the greatest part of the extensive apartment, at least sufficiently so as to enable her to distinguish various objects within it. The room itself appeared large, and was fitted up in the ancient style of feudal magnificence. Various banners, denoting both the honours and achievements of its original and present possessors, ornamented the walls, while statues cased in complete armour gave to the *tout ensemble* a terrific grandeur.

This apartment evidently appeared to be the same in which the feudal chieftain was accustomed to entertain his guests, or the vassals of his domains, upon those solemn days which custom devoted to festivity and

the amusements of the tournament ; as in the centre stood an immense table, seemingly composed of solid oak, and capable of accommodating a numerous train of visitors. This was no inconsiderable ornament, as it gave a relief to the vacancy which otherwise, from the size, the eye would naturally have encountered. All, however, was now dreary and solitary ; no luscious viands graced the festive board, nor did the household minstrel, proud of his official duties, sweep the trembling strings, raising and depressing, like Timotheus of old, the passions of his auditors at will.

While the Princess silently contemplated these neglected remains of feudal power, she insensibly sunk into a meditation, which recalled, with poignant force, her own fallen state ; and her imagination, taking flight into the wilder regions of fancy, almost depicted her late beloved husband seated upon the throne, raised conspicuous above the rest, while his joyous friends

friends circulated the sparkling glass, and seemed to endeavour to excite around them mirth and hilarity.

As the Princess thus indulged in this air-built reverie, her attention was suddenly recalled to her present situation, by objects which at first struck her with terror and dismay. Her eye, although employed in contemplating vacancy, had been fixed upon the upper end of the apartment, when two figures, which seemed to emerge from a door that the distance had concealed from her observation, appeared. As they advanced towards the table, their forms became more distinct; and although at the first moment the supernatural account which she had previously heard rushed upon her memory, the next amply convinced her that the present intruders upon the northern apartments were human beings. In her situation, however, these were more to be dreaded than supernatural objects; from such, even of a malignant order, her constant practice of every virtue was a

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sufficient protection. But although the mind of the Princess was, as has been observed, free from common superstition, she was nevertheless sensible that an all-powerful Providence might sometimes, for the wisest purposes, permit a communication between the souls of the departed and the living; but a converse with such, her conscience told her, would strengthen, rather than weaken her mind. Fortunate indeed would she have thought herself, could she have been persuaded that the objects which she beheld were of that description; but this, both their manners and gestures sufficiently contradicted. They appeared completely armed, and it was evident that one was much superior in age to the other. They were engaged in an apparently interesting conversation, which seemed so completely to occupy their attention as to prevent their paying a regard to any thing else; but as they approached nearer the window, it immediately occurred to Adeline, that the same means which gave her

so complete a view of their actions, would infallibly betray her to them. Alarmed at this idea, she was hastily retreating, when she perceived that, by seating herself upon the ground, the underwood, by which she was surrounded, was of a height sufficient to prevent their observing her, though not so high as to have the effect of screening them from her observation. Accordingly she eagerly caught at this temporary asylum, which she hailed as a preservation from destruction, or perhaps from falling into hands her very nature revolted at ; for she judged, and with some justice, that had she ventured to retrace her steps, they might, upon advancing nearer to the window, have perceived her flight, and intercepted her return to that part of the Castle which alone she had hitherto considered as inhabited ; for she had little doubt but that a secret communication with the exterior was well known to them.

Secure as she conceived herself from their observation, she employed her time

in scrutinizing their actions, and her heart intuitively shrunk within her, whenever their looks seemed pointed towards her chosen asylum. When her thoughts became more composed, she at first concluded that they belonged to a society of banditti, who had chosen that retired and deserted spot as one of their occasional places of rendezvous ; but then, the nobility and frankness of countenance so conspicuous in both, made her hesitate in her conjectures ; and so absorbed was she in torturing her imagination respecting them, that she did not at first perceive they had taken their station in the window, and seemed looking with deep attention towards the spot where she was concealed. This circumstance renewed the terror which a confidence in the security of her retreat had considerably abated. While they remained in their present situation, it was almost impossible for her to move without a discovery ; and she therefore determined to lie concealed, until, by their absence from the window, she could regain
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the tract by which she had entered this hitherto untrodden wilderness. They still continued in the same deep and interesting conversation, at least as well as could be judged by their actions, which were impressive, and indicated the meditation of important business.

While Adeline thus attentively watched the motions of these unknown neighbours, and awaited with the utmost anxiety the moment when she could escape from her unpleasant situation, she fancied that she heard herself called from a distance ; it now first occurred to her, that from the length of time which she had been absent, the family might have been uneasy concerning her, and she almost shuddered when her imagination, fertile in tormenting her, suggested that the noble-minded Roberto might harbour a suspicion that she had made an ungenerous use of his confidence. She listened attentively ; and in the anxiety of ascertaining the reality of the sound which she had heard, forgetting her desire of concealment, she bent forward, in order to

catch the voice more correctly, if repeated. By this manœuvre she became exposed to the view of the mysterious strangers; and although the forgetfulness of Adeline was momentary, she at the same instant beheld them gazing at her with the utmost attention, until suddenly, as if impelled by some rapidly-formed thought, they retired in the greatest haste from the window, and were soon concealed from all further observation. This manœuvre, although it released the Princess from her unpleasant situation, created her new alarms; she immediately conjectured that their sudden retreat was occasioned by some determination which they had formed respecting her, as it was evident she had been seen by them. Again she heard her name repeated, but in a voice which banished her apprehensions, as it was the voice of friendship—of Agnes. Joyfully she hailed the well-known sound, and heedless of opposing obstacles, she ran with the utmost rapidity along the scarce-trodden path, until regaining the inhabited
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part of the domains, she beheld her benevolent friend, whose anxiety, in not finding her in those walks which she had been accustomed to take, had almost risen into a dread lest some unforeseen accident had happened to her. The joy of Agnes at the sight of the Princess was unfeigned; it received, however, a considerable check on beholding the colour almost instantly forsake her cheeks; and before she could inquire into the cause of her agitation, the exhausted Adeline had sunk insensible upon her bosom. Fortunately the mind of her amiable supporter, though tenderly alive to every finer feeling, was not tinctured with that excessive sensibility which shrinks from unexpected danger; but unacquainted with the cause, although her terrified appearance was a convincing proof that it was occasioned by some extraordinary occurrence, she was at some loss in what manner to act. The distance to the entrance of the Castle precluded the possibility of her conveying her thither while in

that inanimate state; and she dreaded to leave her while she sought for assistance, lest, on a return of her senses during her absence, the terror at finding herself thus apparently deserted might be heightened to so great a degree as to occasion a relapse, which might prove too powerful for a frame already much weakened by agitation. Of the nature of her alarm she entertained not the most distant idea, neither had she any conception that the Princess had wandered so far beyond the usual extent of their walk, as she did not discover her until she had left the angle, behind which the path leading round the northern part of the Castle commenced at a considerable distance. Notwithstanding the application of water, which was fortunately near at hand, and the only immediate remedy that presented itself, the Princess continued in a state of insensibility so long, that had not a slight pulsation indicated the existence of the vital spark, she might, to a casual observer, have been deemed a lifeless corpse.

corpse. Agnes felt seriously alarmed, and had just come to a determination to repose her inanimate burthen upon the bank, and hasten to the Castle for assistance, when chance led Roberto near to the spot. The cry of his daughter soon brought him to her assistance, and with the utmost anxiety he inquired into the cause of the Princess's illness. To this question Agnes could not give a satisfactory answer; she related, however, the occurrence as it happened. Roberto listened in silence, without making any comments upon the occasion; only observing, that he made no doubt but that upon her recovery, the Princess would satisfy the anxiety of her friends. Immediately on his arrival, Roberto had eased his daughter of the weight which she had so long sustained, and under which she had nearly sunk, when so fortunately relieved. At length a deep-fetched sigh seemed to indicate returning animation; and the delighted Agnes eagerly watched for the moment when she should be recognized by her

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her beloved mistress. With a convulsive struggle Adeline once more opened her eyes; there appeared, however, a wildness in them, which both shocked and terrified her benevolent friends; but however agonizing their first sensations were, they were considerably heightened when the object of their solicitude, gazing around her, and finding herself supported in the arms of a man, gave a piercing shriek, and suddenly disengaging herself from Roberto, fled with incredible rapidity towards the Castle. This sudden exertion, however, was but of short duration, as long ere she could reach the wished-for asylum, she sunk exhausted to the earth. Agnes and Roberto, amazed and terrified at an occurrence so totally unexpected, hastened with all expedition after the hapless fugitive, though they could not overtake her in time to prevent her fall. The latter kindly attempted to assist Agnes to raise her, but his generous heart was struck with the utmost horror, when he found his endeavours occasioned a repetition

tion of those heart-rending shrieks which had before so terrified him, attended with a violent struggle to disengage herself from them. This exertion, however, once more gave way to exhausted nature, and Adeline again sunk into a state of insensibility.

The afflicted friends seized this opportunity of conveying her to her apartments, a measure attended with no further trouble. Madalen was immediately summoned to their assistance ; but her deathlike swoon for a long time withstood all the stimulatives that were liberally applied. At length they succeeded in restoring animation, but alas ! it was unaccompanied with reason. A violent delirium succeeded, which the united skill of Roberto and Madalen found it impossible to subdue, notwithstanding the former was no mean proficient in the science of medicine, it being frequently the custom in those days, as before observed, for the head valet, or esquire of a knight,

knight, to practise, not only the art of surgery, but that of pharmacy in general.

As the information of Agnes, relative to the first commencement of the illness by which the Princess was attacked, though vague and unconnected, was attended by some circumstances which struck Roberto as proceeding from more than a common cause, and as her constant illness since had precluded all possibility of information by which he might obtain any insight into it, he gave particular orders, both to Agnes and to Madalen, to be very attentive to the general tenor of her discourse in the paroxysms of delirium, as, from her preceding conduct, and more particularly from the extreme horror which she seemed to experience when, on her recovery from her first swoon, she found herself in the arms of a man, he made no doubt but that her illness was occasioned by something more important than what it was first attributed to, the being overcome with intense heat.

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He was urged to this conduct by the most prudent motives, and as he had frequently heard, and indeed had experienced, that people, though in the strongest stages of delirium, sometimes adverted to the real cause which had made so great an impression upon their minds, he trusted that he should procure a clue by which he might be enabled to trace the origin of her malady.

The high esteem in which Roberto held the Princess would have prevented his attempting to have obtained the knowledge he wished, in such an apparent clandestine manner, being perfectly convinced, that if she had discovered any thing which she supposed was unknown to him, and which might be productive of any serious inconvenience, her generosity would have readily disclosed it, had not a dereliction of reason prevented the communication. Circumstanced, however, as she was, that was impossible; and should any secret danger exist, it consequently might burst over their heads

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at the very moment when they thought themselves most secure. It was not long before Roberto reaped, in a small degree, the fruits of his precaution; the allusions of the Princess to the scene which she had beheld in the northern apartments, were frequent, but mysterious; and although it was evident that her fright was occasioned by some transaction connected with that part of the Castle, yet the information was so vague as not to afford any just idea of the real fact.

It has been already noticed, that the part of the Castle alluded to had been for years neglected. The only known communication from the interior, which was protected by immense iron bolts of a peculiar construction, had never been opened during the memory of the oldest inhabitant of the domains; and from some traditionary tales concerning it, which were rendered more important by the circumstance of its being thus deserted, superstition had accumulated unheard-of horrors within its desolated chambers;

chambers; neither could the greatest rewards have persuaded any one of the neighbourhood to have ventured within the terrific premises. This dread of the interior, in process of time, extended even to the walks which adorned the outside, which, most probably, the majestic wildness and grandeur that particularly distinguished them served to enhance. Rocks, piled by the hand of Nature upon rocks, disclosed their yawning cavities beneath, while their summits, crowned with groves of cypress and pines, proudly bade defiance to the threatening tempests. The dire effects of superstitious prejudice had caused that neglect which reigned paramount through this quarter of the extensive domains; and those odoriferous shrubs which, originally trained in artificial elegance, afforded a pleasing shade to the entrance of these cavities, adorned with the choicest specimens of natural productions, had, for years past, been suffered to riot in such luxurious exuberance, as to cause an interruption to
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the paths which they were planted to adorn. Restrained by ideal objects of terror, no one, for many years, had been known to have entered this wilderness; and so prevalent indeed was the dread entertained of this part, that even Roberto had never attempted to penetrate its recesses. From the expressions, however, that occasionally escaped the lips of the Princess, it became evident to him that, on the important day when she was first seized with the dreadful malady under which she was suffering, she had wandered into this dreadful tract; and as he judged she must be ignorant of the reports so generally circulated, as since her residence in the Castle, it had never been made the subject of conversation, he concluded that the circumstance, whatever it might be, that had made so extraordinary an impression upon a mind peculiarly gifted with resolution, did not originate in superstitious fancy, but in reality.

The recovery of the Princess now became an object of the highest importance;

Roberto

Roberto had exhausted every source of his own medical knowledge, without obtaining the wished-for effect ; he determined, therefore, to call to his assistance the Father St. Eustace, a monk belonging to a neighbouring monastery, whose great skill had long been the theme of every tongue, not only in the neighbourhood, but throughout the whole province. Yet, notwithstanding the urgent necessity which imperiously demanded his forming such a determination, he was conscious that it required the utmost caution. From the nature of the service with which he had been entrusted by his chief, he dared not disclose to St. Eustace the name or rank of the invalid, and he dreaded lest his penetrating mind should discover the real nature of her situation ; for so universally was his character known as the champion of the oppressed, that he made no doubt but that, if he found her detained against her will, he would use his extensive influence, in order to restore the injured Princess to the society of her friends.

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The mind of Roberto shuddered at dissimulation, yet he knew no way by which he could maintain his fidelity to his liege Lord, except by having recourse to a fabricated, yet plausible tale. Thus urged by fancied necessity, he gave the requisite instructions to the different menials, and more particularly to Madalen and Agnes, relative to their conduct to St. Eustace; and having, as he trusted, guarded against detection, he hastened in person to the monastery, to request the attendance of the monk at the Castle. St. Eustace, whose principal happiness consisted in the performance of those duties which rendered him an ornament to human nature, was no sooner made acquainted with the emergency of the case, than he hastened to accompany Roberto. Intense study, accompanied by numerous experiments, had disclosed to him the long-concealed virtues of the botanical world, while, by his judicious application of his medicines, he had nearly rendered many of them specifics in particular

cular cases; and from the success which generally attended his prescriptions, he was almost deemed infallible. During their journey to the Castle, he made the most minute and pointed inquiries as to the origin and progress of the complaint; but, to the great relief of Roberto, expressed no curiosity in respect to the friends or connexions of his patient. Upon his arrival, he was immediately introduced into the apartment of the invalid; and was surprised, but happy to find that a considerable change must have taken place since Roberto had left the Castle, as she appeared in a sound and calm sleep, which Agnes, who had not left her bedside for some hours previous to his arrival, informed him she had sunk into, after taking the last medicine which had been administered to her. This circumstance, joined to a perceptible moisture upon the skin, was a certain indication that the crisis of the disorder was past; and St. Eustace pronounced, to the extreme joy of the whole family, that she
would

would awake restored to her senses. A short time justified his assertion; Adeline opened her eyes, but although they were not entirely divested of wildness, yet her senses were sufficiently clear to recognize the kind and affectionate friends by whom she was attended. She attempted to address Agnes, who could scarcely restrain her joy within proper bounds; but the interference of St. Eustace prevented all conversation, as he peremptorily commanded that the invalid should be kept perfectly quiet, and that no one should as yet revert to any subject that might tend to bring past events to her recollection. But although the Princess was thus deprived of uttering her thanks to her kind friends, yet the expression of her countenance was an ample indication of her sentiments. St. Eustace, perceiving that his assistance might be dispensed with, as time and care only were necessary to complete that convalescence so fortunately began, returned to his monastery, to the great relief and satisfaction

faction of Roberto, who felt his mind eased of a weighty load; though, at the same time, he was surprised at the want of curiosity in the monk, especially as he at times fancied that he looked at the invalid with a more than common attention.

Although, in the presence of his family, Roberto appeared as usual, yet his mind was far from being at ease respecting the northern apartments, and he determined, if possible, to investigate the mystery, although with the utmost secrecy, as he neither wished to revive old reports, or to alarm his family unnecessarily. As a previous step, however, he resolved to examine the outside walls, and as this was a business which was merely consistent with his ordinary duty, he took with him one of the most intelligent of the menials, in whom, if necessary, he knew he could place a perfect confidence. To his astonishment, but innate satisfaction, every part was secure; neither did it appear possible for the art of man to obtain an entrance. To cross

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the moat was equally impossible, and as he had never neglected attending the draw-bridge when it was necessary to be let down, and constantly saw it well secured again, he felt assured that the Castle contained no one but its accustomed inhabitants. Still, when he recalled to mind the fervid, but unconnected expressions uttered by the Princess, his mind was bewildered in a chaos of uncertainty; and he became more anxious than ever for the perfect convalescence of the fair invalid.

The recovery of Adeline was gradual, but tedious; she frequently reflected upon the discovery which she had accidentally made, and felt herself interested by a more than common curiosity. So strong indeed was the impression made by the younger stranger, that he became the companion both of her waking and sleeping thoughts; and her restless imagination whispered that such might have been the form of her long-lost Rodolphus, had fate permitted his existence. So long a period, however,
had

had elapsed since the smallest intelligence had been received either of the infant or his preservers, that hope was become extinct; and she gave way to the idea, that, notwithstanding his solemn assertions to the contrary, Albert had discovered his chosen retreat, and had taken sufficient precautions to prevent any future claims to the principality of Clagenfurth.

As soon as the Princess was able, she began to resume her walks with Agnes, though to a very limited extent. Returning one afternoon from the gardens, where she had indulged herself more than usual, she found herself fatigued, and dismissing her attentive companion, retired into her apartment, in order to recruit her exhausted spirits, by endeavouring to take some repose. Sunk upon the downy couch, the refreshing deity soon extended its beneficent influence, and she sunk into an apparent forgetfulness of all her earthly sorrows. Scarcely, however, had memory yielded to the soothing pleasures of oblivion, ere a

thousand phantasies, flitting in fantastic shapes before her eyes, disturbed that calmness of repose which she so vainly hoped to have experienced. At one time, scenes of earlier years seemed to pass in visionary shades, which on a sudden were supplanted by mystic emblems of unknown futurity.

Armed as when he was accustomed to lead his brave retainers against those who braved his resentment, the late Prince of Clagenfurth seemed to stand before her; but although his eye beamed with that refulgence which, whilst it animated his followers to victory, struck terror into his opponents, a soft melancholy was diffused over his countenance, as, fixing his penetrating looks upon the Princess, he pointed to a spot where a warrior, of whose features she had a faint, but confused recollection, was instructing a youth in those warlike exercises which in that age constituted the principal part of the education allotted to the offspring of nobility; while the latter, glowing with juvenile ardour, seemed eager,

ger, not merely to perform his allotted exercises, but even to anticipate the wishes of his instructor. Actuated by the genuine impulse of maternal affection, she attempted to rush to his embrace, when suddenly a deep abyss opened beneath her feet, and prevented her nearer approach. From the wide-yawning gulph the terrific form of the usurper Albert appeared, brandishing in his hand a deadly dagger, which he pointed at the bosom of the blooming youth, while his attending satellites, seizing the unresisting victim, hurried him from his faithful guardian, heedless of the cries and entreaties of the agonized parent. At this moment tremendous peals of thunder seemed to threaten vengeance upon the daring aggressor, who, careless of the awful denunciation, fearlessly pronounced the doom of certain destruction upon those who dared to disobey the mandates of his unrestrained fury. From this terrific scene, where the mind of the Princess seemed agitated even beyond the common suffer-

ings of humanity, she was released by the flight of that repose which she had sought, in the hope of obtaining a sweet oblivion of her cares; but she awoke restless and unrefreshed; and so deep was the impression which the dream made upon her mind, that it was in vain she endeavoured to treat it as the simple effect of a distempered imagination, rendered, by a long confinement, liable to receive any impression, however contrary to reason and judgment. The appearance also in the northern apartments seemed to affix a more than common interest to this awful visitation, and filled her mind with a redoubled share of inquietude. Could it be possible, she mentally inquired, that the forms which she had beheld in the deserted apartments were those of the long-lost Rodolphus and his generous preserver? It appeared strange that they should choose the Castle of their greatest enemy, one who had pursued them with the most malignant intentions, for their place of security. Thought succeeded thought,

thought, and each new sentiment served only to set the former one at variance, and to plunge her into greater perplexity. The consideration, that although Albert was the professed enemy of the poor fugitives, yet as years had elapsed since the Castle had been entirely deserted by him, the sagacity of Seckendorf might deem it the safest place of concealment, would, for a moment, make the circumstance seem not so void of probability as upon the first suggestion of such an idea it appeared; more particularly, as the popular superstition most effectually prevented any intrusion from the peasantry of the neighbourhood, or even from the inhabitants of the Castle themselves. Still, admitting the reality, by what means could they in the first instance have obtained admission into a place so peculiarly situated, and so scrupulously watched by the prying eye of constant observation? Here conjecture was again at a loss, or floated in wild uncertainty in the tumultuous regions of thought.

While Adeline thus tormented herself by endeavouring to account for the wandering illusions of sleep, and to persuade herself that a more than common importance was attached to them, a new idea suddenly occurred to her, which suggested that the noble-minded Roberto was their secret protector. For the confirmation of this pleasing sentiment, she recalled to her memory all the kind and unexpected civilities which she had received from him; she recollected also the particular uneasiness which he seemed to feel during the time that Martuccio, by the express orders of Albert, superseded him in the supreme command of the Castle, and the unequivocal joy which he expressed at his departure. This, joined to the attention paid to herself, and more especially his late mark of confidence in granting her the free liberty of the whole domain, served to stamp the hasty-formed idea more impressively upon her mind; and so far was she led astray by the pleasing thought, that she had thus casually discovered

discovered her long-lost Rodolphus, as to indulge herself in the idea that she should soon have an opportunity of enfolding him in her widowed arms. Fraught with this hope, the Princess lost sight of that equanimity of mind, and that steady prudence, which had constantly been the uniform guide of her actions; and she hastily determined to embrace the first opportunity that offered, not only of relating to Roberto the events prior to her illness, but also the subsequent dream, and the conclusions which she had drawn from it.

The Princess, who rapidly regained her former health and beauty, soon found an opportunity of entering into a conversation relative to her illness. This gave great satisfaction to Roberto, who had long studied in what manner he could introduce the subject with the delicacy which he wished to observe; but constantly found himself at a loss how to accomplish a wish which he felt so great an interest in obtaining. Animated by the sanguine expecta-

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tions which she had formed, Adeline minutely described her adventure in the northern part of the domains, neither did she omit the relation of her dream. But while she dwelt with peculiar interest upon the description, she endeavoured to discover by the expression of Roberto's countenance, whether he was privy to the concealment of the unknown inhabitants of the Castle. She was disappointed in the scrutiny; indeed the surprise, not unmixed with terror, at such an unexpected, but important discovery, which Roberto displayed, was a sufficient evidence that he had hitherto been in total ignorance that such near neighbours were in existence. So great indeed was his astonishment, and for some time he appeared so immersed in thought, as even to forget that he was in the presence of the Princess, until suddenly starting up from the seat which at her request he had taken, he apologized for the unintentional rudeness which he had been guilty of, and freely acknowledged the deep impression which her narrative had made upon

upon his mind. “ I esteem it, however, (said he, addressing the Princess with the utmost respect), a most fortunate occurrence that the discovery is made prior to the arrival of Albert at the Castle, as, notwithstanding my ignorance of such a circumstance, I should have found it no easy matter to have allayed the suspicions of the chief, or convinced him of my fidelity; more particularly, as I conceive, from the manner of Martuccio, that I am no favourite of his, who, I doubt not, has contrived to render himself so necessary to the Prince, as to reign the triumphant favourite at the court of Clagenfurth.”

A slight emotion flushed over the countenance of Adeline at the mention of Albert's arrival; it passed, however, unobserved by Roberto, who, continuing his observations, added—“ My duty, and probably our individual safety, require that I should, with the utmost diligence, make a strict search through the whole range of apartments, which until now have been

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deemed excluded from the eye of man for so many years. Let me, however, entreat you to keep this discovery secret, both from Madalen and Agnes; for, although their long residence here in peaceful security has lulled to rest those superstitious terrors which upon their first arrival they entertained, in common with the neighbouring peasantry, yet the tale which you have now related would perhaps revive them, with equal, if not superior force, as being authenticated by one whom they looked up to as the pattern of human excellence. As, therefore, my intended search will, I trust, either discover these unknown intruders, or occasion their departure by some private entrance as yet unknown, it will be cruel to imbitter their future happiness, by making them acquainted with circumstances which, after an examination, should it prove a fruitless one, it would neither be necessary or prudent to reveal."

With this request the Princess readily complied; but inquired concerning the reasons

reasons he would of course be under the necessity of giving, to account for so unexpected, and, as it might be thought by the timid and superstitious, daring search. "Will not," asked she, "the act itself create an alarm, particularly as you recollect that during my illness I frequently alluded to the figures which I had seen in the northern apartments? and of course they will conclude, that since the return of my reason, I have given such an explicit confirmation of the reality of the appearances which I saw there, as to occasion your taking this extraordinary measure."

"Madame," rejoined Roberto, "with humble submission to your superior judgment, I am of opinion it will produce the very contrary effect, as it will be to the *expressions* which you uttered in the height of your fever, and not to the *reality*, that I shall attribute my actions; alledging that it is to satisfy them, as well as the menials of the Castle, that the fancied appearance of human beings were solely the effects of delirium, that
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I make the search. Thus the purposed end will every way be answered, as should the examination be futile, it will satisfy the inhabitants that it proceeded from frenzy alone; or, if a discovery should be made, we shall ever have cause to bless the hour that induced the Princess of Clagenfurth to penetrate the wild recesses of the neglected domains. Yet, Madame, to you I must confess, that my anxiety for the search does not proceed so much from a wish of discovering who the strangers are, as, from your description of them, they are not of a class to cause much alarm, as of learning the secret means by which they could enter the Castle; as you must be sensible of the importance of this knowledge, not only for our present, but future safety."

"Is it not possible," inquired the Princess, "that they might scale some unfrequented part of the walls, which possibly may have received some injury from time, hitherto unnoticed?"

That idea," rejoined Roberto, "occurred

red to me some time ago, and during the continuance of your illness, I took an opportunity, attended by a domestic, whose fidelity I can depend upon, of examining the whole circuit of the walls—a task which I have never undertaken since the first time of my appointment to the command. To my surprise, but satisfaction, the whole was in perfect repair; neither could the ingenuity of man contrive to scale them without assistance from the interior, and then only with the greatest difficulty.”

“ I hope,” replied Adeline, “ that your search will be sufficiently satisfactory to remove all apprehensions of any future danger; but should you succeed in the discovery of strangers, I hope——”

Adeline paused; an indescribable feeling seemed to flutter round her heart, as she recollected the form of the youngest, and the tenor of her dream. The thought that if these intruders should prove to be the long-lost Rodolphus and his generous protector, she had betrayed the mysterious
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secret of their retreat, and perhaps delivered them into the power of their most inveterate enemy, caused an expression of countenance which could not escape the penetrating eye of Roberto ; and as she had so incautiously mentioned the idea in which her fancy had indulged, he readily guessed the cause of her distress. For a moment that generous man felt hurt that, after the confidence which he had placed in her, and the uniform treatment which she had received from him, she should entertain a suspicion that he could willingly inflict upon a heart already nearly overpowered by unmerited misfortunes, a wound of a more cruel and deadly nature than she had yet experienced, by betraying, if such should prove the result of his search, her newly-discovered son to his most inveterate foe. But his temporary resentment soon yielded to the native dignity of his soul, when he reflected on the natural anxiety of maternal affection, and eager to remove any remaining doubt, he anticipated the
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tenor of her intended request, by remarking that he should think it the happiest moment of his life, if, in the performance of a duty, which the urgency of the case, and perhaps the very security of the Castle itself, required, he should be the happy means of reuniting a mother to a son, whom she had so long despaired of finding. "Believe me, Madame," continued Roberto, "that neither power or threats should ever induce me to betray a secret revealed in a manner so extraordinary, as almost to make it appear rather the ordination of a superior power, than the effect of mere chance. Neither, by such a concealment, should I esteem myself deficient to my chief, as I have received no orders respecting Rodolphus; and, except by common report, which is frequently found fallacious, I was even in ignorance of his existence. Long before his birth, fortune fixed my residence in this Castle; and few, as I have before had occasion to observe, are the visitors to this sequestered spot; the transactions of
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the busy world pass therefore away unknown and unregarded. Yet, although we are thus almost entirely separated from the great body of society, and are cut off, as it were, from the common intercourse of mankind, we experience a happiness which those who are more deeply engaged in worldly pursuits can seldom attain. As our wants are few, they are easily satisfied ; neither do the stings of disappointment fester in our minds, or interrupt the harmony of the select and social circle ; and to such as endeavour to follow the paths of rectitude, the joys of an approving conscience will turn the most dreary desert to a blissful paradise. You, Madame, may be surprised to hear these observations from a man in whom Albert has placed the greatest confidence, and who confesses, that, in his younger days, virtue was known to him merely as a name, while the more fascinating charms of vice engaged his whole attention. I will not pain the feeling heart of the Princess of Clagenfurth by enumerating the scenes in which,

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spurning all impediments, my zeal to gratify the wishes of my chief engaged me; they were such as I now shudder at, even in idea. Such is the revolution that calm reflection, joined to the affectionate observations of a beloved object, have caused in the mind and sentiments of one who had been accustomed to turn admonition into ridicule, and to make a jest of domestic happiness."

"I can readily conceive," said the Princess, interrupting him, "that Madalen was the loadstone which so forcibly attracted your attention from all other less amiable pursuits."

"True, Madame," rejoined Roberto, "Madalen was certainly the primary object of attraction; yet I question, with all the influence which she possessed, powerful as it was, whether she would have succeeded in detaching me from the vicious measures which I was perpetually encouraged to engage in, not by example alone, but sometimes by the absolute obedience which I
thought

thought due to the commands of my chief, had not a circumstance, which I then considered almost as a punishment rather than a remuneration of my services, taken place, namely, my nomination to the command of these domains. At first I almost determined upon refusing it, and on leaving one who I thought had so inadequately rewarded me for services, which few would have executed with greater zeal or fidelity; but the earnest persuasion of Madalen, whom I had just married, and who doubtless foresaw the happy effects which might result from my being removed to such a distance from the constant allurements of temptation, at length reconciled me to the plan. The result has most satisfactorily proved the justness of her discrimination; and here I have learnt the true duties of obedience. If I once accepted the confidence of my chief, no power should ever induce me to betray it; but never will Roberto take upon him a charge which his conscience cannot acquit him of executing."

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At this observation the Princess inquired with a smile, how long it was since a resolution so noble and praiseworthy had been made?

“That question, together with the accompanying smile, Madame,” replied Roberto, “seems to indicate a suspicion of inconsistency between my conduct and my assertions; but I feel happy in its giving me an opportunity, which I have long wished for, of explaining myself, by relating the circumstances which induced me to accept the charge of the Princess of Clagenfurth. But I fear that I intrude too much upon your condescension, in permitting me the honour of so long a conversation.”

“Far from it,” replied the Princess, in a tone of ineffable sweetness; “rank, instead of being debased by the conversation of the virtuous, is ennobled by it; and although the general custom of society has, from motives of policy, placed some restraint upon those whom fortune has fixed
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in a superior class, in order to prevent them from mixing too indiscriminately with their inferiors in public, still there are hours of relaxation, when the truly great and noble will eagerly avail themselves of an opportunity that offers of enjoying the company of those who are pre-eminently distinguished by their virtuous principles, and real intrinsic worth—a pleasure seldom to be experienced amid the turmoils and luxury of a court. Yet, even there, the noble sentiments of Roberto would, I trust, when known, have received from me the attention due to his merit; and can I then now deem the constant attention and the wish of amusement an intrusion? an attention which, deprived of all other resources, not only tends to alleviate the anxiety I cannot totally discard from my mind, but contributes also, in no small degree, to render even confinement less irksome; but, in the present instance, I must confess that I have long wished to learn, if consistent with the obedience you judge due to the commands

commands of your chief, the reasons assigned for my residence here ; and indeed my curiosity is now more powerfully excited, by those observations which occasioned a smile I could not suppress."

Roberto, after having again repeated his acknowledgements to the Princess for her generous condescension to himself, and having thanked her in the warmest terms of gratitude for her kindness, both to Madalen and Agnes, entered upon the following short explanation.

" I have, Madame, before observed, that for many years past, scarcely any person, except occasionally a weary pilgrim, when journeying to the shrine, which either his own piety or obedience to the irresistible commands of his rigid confessor obliges him to seek, has visited the Castle of Mittelewald. Remote from the common tract, and enveloped amid rugged precipices, and almost impenetrable groves, it terrifies, rather than invites the curious traveller ; this, joined to the various superstitious reports current
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in the neighbourhood, secures us from intrusion. It was about six weeks previous to your arrival here, when I was greatly surprised at hearing the sound of the horn proceeding from the centinels specially appointed to take the charge of the drawbridge; it announced the approach of a stranger; the Castle gates had been closed for the night, as it was some time past sunset, the usual hour of securing the different approaches. It has ever been an invariable rule with me, and indeed it is a regular order from the chief, never to open them, or to lower the drawbridge after that period, unless upon the greatest emergency, or some other particular occasion, such as the arrival of the chief himself, or any accredited messenger from him; and in order to obviate any inconvenience which the strict observation of this ordinance might occasion, should any unforeseen accident prevent the arrival of any person, whom either business or curiosity might tempt to seek the Castle before the allotted time,

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the cottage, which is at some small distance from, but within sight of the bridge, was appropriated for their reception, and proper accommodations were provided by the occupier of it, who is placed there by the chief for the special purpose. For some time I hesitated whether I should personally answer the signal, or else give the counter one, commanding the stranger, whoever he was, to be conducted to the cottage, and to remain there until the morning. The evening was dark, and threatened to be tempestuous. This circumstance, and the request of Madalen, not to expose myself unnecessarily to the storm, which appeared to be rapidly approaching, determined me. The necessary measures for announcing my determination of not opening the gates until the morning were given; but scarcely could they have reached the ears of the stranger, when the signal was repeated; and, almost immediately, the junior officer, whose duty it is to superintend the centinels for the night, appeared,

and informed me that the person who demanded admittance at that late hour, was an officer of rank, belonging to the court of Albert, who was the bearer of a message to me, of the highest importance to the interests of his chief. Upon this information I hastened to the drawbridge, and having, by a private signal, used upon similar occasions, ascertained the reality of the fact, I immediately admitted him. By this time the storm was increased almost to a hurricane ; and both my visitor and myself found ourselves happy when seated by a comfortable fireside. After the stranger had taken some refreshment, Madalen and Agnes arose for the purpose of retiring, naturally supposing that the subject of the stranger's mission was not of a nature to be communicated to them ; but, observing their intention, he requested them to remain, saying, that the orders, of which he was the bearer from Albert, concerned them equally with the commander of the Castle. This exordium excited no small degree of surprise.

surprise. They however complied, awaiting, in silent expectation, the result of such an unusual circumstance."

"Was this officer known to you?" said the Princess.

"No, Madame," replied Roberto, "not at the time. Indeed, I was going to observe that it very much excited my surprise that he did not announce himself to me by name; and I should certainly have suspected some deception, had he not produced the well-known signet belonging to Albert?"

"Excuse me," said the Princess, "for again interrupting a narrative which becomes more and more interesting; but I wish to ask if you have, since that first introduction, obtained the knowledge of his name?"

"Yes, Madame, it was Martuccio. I recollected him instantly, when he attended you to the Castle, although his dress and appearance were very different."

"I judged so," rejoined the Princess, "and shall now be prepared to listen to

any tale, however fraught with falsehood ; but proceed."

After a short pause, as if to recollect himself, Roberto obeyed. ' Notwithstanding,' said Martuccio, ' your retired situation, you must doubtless have heard that the victorious Albert, our chief, has accomplished the conquest of the province of Clagenfurth.' I replied in the affirmative ; but added that I was totally unacquainted with any of the particulars, having received my information, in general terms, from one of those wandering mendicants I have before mentioned, who confessed that he had only heard it from a brother pilgrim, never having been in that part of the country himself. At this declaration, I fancied that I could perceive an expression of satisfaction in the countenance of Martuccio, which rather surprised me, although, even in my own mind, I could assign no reason for such an emotion, and accordingly I took no notice of it. He proceeded to inform me that the conquest was attended with little difficulty,

difficulty, as there existed in the principality, and more especially in the city of Clagenfurth itself, two parties, the one favourable, and the other, which, in point of numbers, and the rank of its adherents, was much superior, inimical to the reigning sovereign, who lost his life in the encounter; but whether by the hands of his own subjects, or the chance of war, was uncertain. In the confusion, however, naturally attendant upon such an occasion, he added, that the Princess had fled to the convent of St. Veil, where she remained for some time in safety. Reports, however, of an alarming nature, having reached her ears, from which she was convinced that the asylum which she had chosen was unable to secure her from the machinations of those who had assisted the conqueror, she had taken the resolution of trusting to the well-known generosity of Albert, and to claim his protection. ‘To our chief,’ continued he, ‘beauty never sues in vain; but I am much mistaken, if, in this instance, his heart is

not materially interested, and that he entertains the most ardent passion for the lovely widow.' You will excuse me, Madame, for repeating the words of Martuccio, as nearly as I can recollect them." Adeline bowed. Her heart was too full at the recollection of the dreadful scene which had been acted within the walls of Clagenfurth, and which had been so misrepresented by the abject minion of the tyrant, in order to forward the nefarious purposes of the conqueror with impunity, to give utterance to her thoughts. 'But,' proceeded Martuccio, 'although Albert immediately determined upon granting her request, he was for some time at a loss how to accomplish his purpose, so as to conceal her retreat from the knowledge of those enemies who threatened to molest her. He was aware that the delicacy of the Princess, and her high sense of propriety, would prevent her acceptance of his personal protection; besides, he considered that the unsettled state of his late acquired territories was a material

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rial obstacle that intervened against his exerting himself with sufficient energy in her cause.

‘ While his mind was thus perplexed, he fortunately recollected the hereditary castle of his ancestors, a place of all others, he observed, the most eligible for a temporary concealment, as he doubted if any one in the principality knew that such a place was in existence. He has accordingly commanded me to order proper apartments to be prepared for her reception, and also to inform you, that upon her arrival here you are enjoined to treat her with all due respect, at the same time to be careful that no stranger of any kind, or under any pretence whatsoever, is to be admitted to her presence, or indeed, if possible to avoid it, even into the Castle, during her residence here. He commands likewise, that upon no account is she to appear without the precincts of the Castle; and that whenever the Princess wishes to walk in any part of the domains, that some one of the family, whom you can

place entire confidence in, will constantly attend her, or at least keep within such a distance as not to lose sight of her; nor upon any account, however plausible, are you to permit her to leave the Castle without his command in person. These restrictions he enforces, more particularly on account of the Princess; being convinced that those who wish to obtain possession of her person will use every possible artifice to succeed, should they, by any unforeseen accident, discover her retreat. Her removal here will of course be conducted with the greatest secrecy.'

"Such, Madame, were the orders I received from Albert, through Martuccio; and although there was something in them that seemed to contradict itself, yet, unaccustomed to scrutinize the actions of my chief, I, without hesitation, accepted the charge, and promised an implicit obedience; and I even flattered myself, that, by guarding you with the utmost caution, I was not only performing my duty to my chief, but
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an acceptable service to yourself; and permit me, Madame, to observe, that if I have been deceived by an artful and well-told tale, which a variety of circumstances now render me suspicious of, your placid resignation, joined to your amiable and generous conduct, has contributed to perpetuate, rather than remove the deception."

Roberto was silent; and Adeline, who, during the recital, had been agitated with a contrariety of sensations which it had given rise to, felt more than ever convinced of the noble principles of Roberto. It was evident that he had been deceived, as to the nature of her detention, by the plausible tale of Martuccio, who had artfully made her misfortunes subservient to his master's designs. The truth of it was however already suspected by Roberto; and she determined upon making him acquainted with the real facts, however painful to her feelings the rehearsal of them might be, as they occurred, from the first invasion of Clagenfurth. It was a duty which she thought in-

cumbent upon her, after the noble and generous confidence which he had placed in her, and from which she resolved not to shrink.

While Adeline, in words most expressive of her feelings, related the various occurrences already noticed, the feelings of Roberto experienced such a variety of transitions, as to render a just description of them impossible. Admiration at the heroism of the Princess, regret for her sufferings, horror at the deliberate cruelty of a chief who was entitled to his obedience, and whom he had hitherto held in the highest respect, together with a detestation at the duplicity of Martuccio, were so blended with each other, that expression was for some time denied him. His thoughts were confused. At one moment he almost doubted the reality of the narrative ; but truth was so conspicuous in every accent, that the doubt instantly vanished. No sooner, however, had he recovered from his astonishment, than, addressing the Princess with increased respect,

respect, he lamented that the strongest tie of gratitude should still bind him to the service of one, who, though possessed of the frailties of human nature, he had always looked up to, as the champion of honour, not as the slave of vindictive passion. "Yet," continued he, "although the servant of Albert, the Princess of Clagenfurth claims every attention in my power; nor shall she ever find the confidence which she has honoured me with misplaced. Banish, therefore, Madame, the fears you may entertain respecting any discovery in the northern apartments, and rather hope for the success of my undertaking, and the accomplishment of your most sanguine wishes."

The heart of Adeline was too full to give utterance to her acknowledgments for a declaration which afforded her a return of that tranquillity to her spirits, that a recollection of her former imprudent communication respecting Adolphus had disturbed. But although the tongue was silent, the countenance was a sufficient index of the

mind, and spoke volumes to the heart of the generous Roberto, who, conceiving that being now soothed by his assurances, his absence would more speedily contribute to restore her to that equanimity of mind which the late conversation had partially disturbed, took his leave, followed by the internal blessings of his fair charge.

No sooner had Roberto left the apartment than the Princess fell into a deep meditation. Her mind, superior to the weaknesses commonly attendant upon her sex, reviewed, when reflection took the lead, with a calmness astonishing even to herself, the various scenes which she had so lately encountered, and silently bent in gratitude to that Providence which had hitherto protected her in safety from the deep-laid schemes of the usurper and his obsequious minion. It is true, they had succeeded in gaining possession of her person ; yet, to find a friend like Roberto, when she had every reason to expect a determined enemy, devoted to the imperious will

will of a tyrannic master, strengthened the hopes of a happy termination to her misfortunes. The conduct of Albert appeared mysterious. While she was under the protection of the abbess of St. Veil, treachery, threats, persuasion, and every allurements that unbounded power and grandeur could offer to her acceptance, was resorted to, in order to obtain possession of her person. Even vows of the most ardent affection were poured forth in profusion, as a temptation for her to share the throne which he had so lately dispossessed her of; and yet, when an artifice the most complicated, and which must have been attended with infinite trouble to bring to perfection, had succeeded, she was left for months unnoticed and unmolested. Sometimes she fancied that her persecutor, satisfied with having obtained the sovereignty, and having removed her from the knowledge of those few friends who remained steadfast in her interest, had doomed her to perpetual imprisonment in this dreary and sequestered retirement. But the more she considered
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the subject, the more her ideas were bewildered, as various reasons militated against this thought. She was aware that policy alone, independent of love, prompted him to endeavour the obtaining her hand, by every means his ingenuity could suggest, as he would then most probably, at least for life, be secured in his recent conquest, beyond the power of the adherents to the late Prince to contest it; and what was of equal consequence, he might bid defiance to the threats of Theodore and the house of De Mountfort, who, perceiving their sister restored to her former rank, would enter upon the cause of the young heir with less zeal, and with abated pretensions; and it was to accomplish this that Adeline would sometimes suppose that he had placed her in a situation, where, being the uncontrouled master, and surrounded with vassals whom he supposed blindly devoted to his will, he trusted, that either by threats or entreaties, he should at last subdue her reluctance, and win her to his purpose. "Never," as the idea suddenly crossed her imagination, ex-
claimed

claimed the Princess, starting from the reverie in which she had indulged since the departure of Roberto, "never shall the hand of Adeline de Mountfort be the reward of murder and deliberate cruelty." Scarcely had she pronounced these words, with a fervour that proved the resolution and intrepidity of her mind, than a slight noise occasioned her to turn her head, when, to her inexpressible terror, she perceived one of the partitions of the apartment in which she was slide back, and before she could recover her alarm, so as to summon assistance, she was seized by a person in complete armour, his vizor closed, who, placing a handkerchief over her mouth, so as to prevent her cries being heard, retreated through the same cavity with the greatest rapidity, carefully closing it behind him. In this dreadful situation we must leave the unfortunate Adeline, and revert to the transactions at the cottage of the Chevalier de Rottenberg.

The surprise of De Rottenberg and the stranger, at the recognition of each other,

was

was mutual, as many years had passed since they had last met : and, in the enthusiasm of the moment, a disclosure of their real characters would have taken place, had not the presence of mind which seldom deserted the latter prevented it, by a look which was well understood ; and as the Chevalier de Rottenberg supposed that his former friend might be in a situation similar to himself, he received him with an equal degree of friendship, by that which he had thought proper to assume.

This stranger was Berthold, who, without disclosing his present pursuits, merely informed De Rottenberg of the occasion of this unexpected meeting. This indefatigable friend, after leaving Sternheim and the Count Von Werdenberg at Clagenfurth, had, in company with Theodore, travelled with the greatest expedition to the hermitage, where Matilda and the faithful Hassan had awaited their arrival with much anxiety. The news of the victory, together with all its concomitant circumstances, had long since

since reached them, as Sebastian, who, it may be recollected, was dispatched with private orders by Berthold, was commanded to call at the hermitage, and give information of the event.

The meeting of Theodore and Matilda was expressive of that true regard which is the constant attendant upon virtuous love, and she hailed his return with sincere but modest joy. But when he gently disclosed to her that she had in existence an uncle, who was impatient to clasp her to his arms, and that that uncle was the Chevalier D'Armfeldt, whose arms had revenged the injuries of her deceased father, she felt herself raised to a degree of happiness which her young heart had never before experienced ; and although the presence and company of Theodore was a source of real joy and satisfaction to her, yet she was impatient to embrace this newly-discovered relative, and urged her friends to acquiesce in the desire of the Count Von Werdenberg, her beloved and respected protector, as speedily as possible.

sible. Few preparations were necessary for their journey ; and Berthold, although his presence was necessary elsewhere, and he wished to begin his search after the Princess of Clagenfurth as soon as possible, determined to escort them the chief part of the way, at least so far as to see them out of any danger. We have already noticed the occurrence which took place on their journey, as it was Theodore and Matilda who were in company with Berthold, when the sudden appearance of Alphonsine alarmed the horses of the two former, and occasioned a separation from their companion, a short time previous to their original intention.

When the mutual surprise of the Chevalier Rottenberg and Berthold had subsided, and tranquillity became restored, the lovely Alphonsine was requested to relate the particulars of her fright, and the means of her escape. This task she performed with all the naiveté of conscious innocence, while, at the same time, she lamented her indiscretion in not having paid a proper attention

tion to the previous remarks of Madame Steller, who, at the same time as she received the apology of her beloved pupil, with that kindness devoid of every austere remark, which is so well calculated to reconcile the mind of youth to itself when labouring under self-condemnation, could not avoid hinting to the Chevalier the little faith he had placed in what he denominated superstitious folly. An animated but friendly argument ensued, which ended, as is generally the case when two adversaries are bigotted to their own opinion, in the conviction of neither, as to the propriety of the sentiments of each other.

The astonishment of De Rottenberg at the discovery that Albert, who had been his most inveterate enemy, and to whom he was chiefly indebted for the disgrace under which he laboured, was an assistant in the delivery of his daughter from the unknown danger which threatened her, and that under so mean a disguise, was considerably encreased by the hasty and peremptory command of Berthold.

Berthold. It was however most promptly obeyed; and the servants attendant upon the cottage, together with the husband of Theresa, who was present, dispersed different ways in the pursuit. Berthold apologized for the liberty he had taken, which, he remarked, was occasioned by circumstances of no common interest, and in which the fates of many were materially involved. He then recapitulated the transactions which had taken place, to the latter part of which the Chevalier listened with evident satisfaction. The unexpected return of the long-lamented Henry Count Von Werdenberg, was hailed by him as an event the most fortunate to himself; and he eagerly asked if the emperor was acquainted with it? Berthold, to convince him more fully of the sentiments which that monarch entertained of him, related the heads of his interesting tale. The eyes of the Chevalier spoke the animation of his soul, while he listened in breathless anxiety for the conclusion, when, unable to sustain the full tide of joy and
hope

hope that returned through their long-deserted channels with renovated force, he caught his wondering Alphonsine in his arms, and, embracing her in the height of paternal affection, exclaimed, "Once more shall the star of the exiled De Rottenberg shine with its usual splendour; nor shall Alphonsine, the precious relic of my adored Constantia, pine away the prime of youth in the oblivion of a cottage."

"Ah! my beloved father," rejoined the blushing maid, "gladly would your Alphonsine remain sheltered beneath a parent's care, and that of the affectionate protectress whom he has provided for me (casting at the same time a look at Madame Steller, which spoke more forcibly than words), far from the dangers or the pleasures of a court, which I have, from those lips, so often heard delineated, the one, as difficult to escape, the other, as frivolous and vexatious; yet (perceiving, as she thought, the features of her father rather discomposed, she hastily added), be assured, that,

that, whether in a cottage or a palace, it shall ever be the pride of your daughter to act in conformity to his wishes; neither, though my untutored heart may feel alarmed at a scene so novel, will I anticipate a want of resolution, when supported by the example and resolution of such friends as Fortune has in her beneficence blessed me with."

Embracing his daughter with, if possible, still greater affection, and assuring her that she would not, in his future arrangements, be deprived of the instruction and countenance of her amiable protectress, he explained the nature of his hopes and expectations, from the exertion of the Count Von Werdenberg in his behalf; and indeed, so clear was the statement, that he fully convinced his attentive auditors of the propriety of his intended plan. During the interesting arguments which naturally ensued on the occasion, the servants, who had been in the pursuit of Albert, returned. Vain, however, had been their exertions. The good genius

of Albert had not entirely forsaken him ; and he found means to elude the diligent search which was made after him, although with great difficulty, as he was several times obliged to secrete himself beneath the thick shelter of the underwood, while his pursuers passed so near, as for their conversation to be overheard ; and to his terror he found that his enemies had every where endeavoured to make him odious, not only to the inhabitants of the principality of Clagenfurth, but also to those of the neighbouring nations.

As all hopes of securing the person of Albert were given up, Berthold, to whom every moment of delay that prevented him from following up his original intention, that of the discovery of the Princess of Clagenfurth, was not only a great object, but also a source of anxiety, prepared for his departure from the cottage of De Rottenberg. Previous to its taking place, he held a serious consultation with the Chevalier, whom, after the circumstances
which

which had transpired respecting the Count VonWerdenberg, he strongly recommended to proceed immediately to Clagenfurth, where the latter was only awaiting the return of an express which had been sent to Vienna ; immediately after which it was his intention to proceed thither ; and there was little doubt but that he would be unable to resist the friendly importunities of the Emperor, to take upon him the highest situation that could be conferred upon a subject, especially as it was with the greatest reluctance that the monarch, upon the first knowledge of his return, would permit him to remain in retirement, and unknown, for a special time agreed upon. Berthold, therefore, strongly recommended him not to lose a moment ; and ere he departed from the cottage, he had the satisfaction of seeing the whole property given in charge to the husband of Theresa, with directions in what manner he should distribute the produce, either until his return, or that he heard from him upon the subject.

While

While Berthold thus entered upon a pursuit, in which, at the present moment, he was the most interested, Albert wandered through the solitary wilds, alone and deserted; but reflection would sometimes interfere, and his conscience whispered that he had deserved, because he had provoked his fate. It is true, that the same prophetic voice which foretold his fall, pointed out the means of redeeming his errors. The path was open; but where should he seek the promised remedy? Could he, a solitary wanderer, expect to find the long-concealed Rodolphus, who had defied every search, when, armed with unlimited power, thousands of spies had been at his command? Even should he prove successful, could he, could Albert, so late a conqueror, tamely submit to crouch beneath the yoke of a feeble boy, and trust to precarious mercy? Perish the ignominious, the dastardly thought! No; still shall my soul rise superior to the frowns of fortune; and, blessed with the love of the adored Ade-

line, Albert shall laugh at the vain attempts of his proud and haughty foes ; secured, both by art and nature, in the Castle of Mittewald, all thoughts of the past shall be banished from remembrance, and each returning sun shall rise to new and endless joy.

Thus tacitly reasoned the fugitive Prince, as he cautiously bent his steps towards his hereditary dominions ; nor, although at the very moment he fatally experienced that the denunciation of the prophetic sibyl was in part fulfilled, would his pride, as yet unconquered by misfortune, look forward to the hope that promised a restoration to honour and happiness.

Alas ! vain are the hopes, the expectations of man ! The cup of misery, destined for Albert, was not yet drained, and he was doomed to experience a wretchedness superior to the loss of power and dominion. The curse denounced against him still wanted something ere it arrived at its climax ; and, to render his misery more poignant, fate had ordained the completion
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of it, at the moment when he deemed himself possessed of all that his haughty mind had judged essential to his happiness.

Accustomed from his youth to undergo the greatest hardships, those he experienced in the present journey, though severe, were borne with patience. The rich reward which he promised himself at the conclusion served to invigorate his nerves, and to enable him to bid defiance to difficulties and dangers. As soon, however, as he had passed beyond the dominions appertaining to, or in alliance with Clagenfurth, he threw off his disguise, and appeared in vestments more suited to him, though he still cautiously concealed his name and rank. He also supplied himself with arms, totally dissimilar to those which he had been accustomed to bear; and, as he feared he might be recognised by his device, he changed it for one more appropriate to his present situation. The former was a sun rising in all its glory; and he now substituted the same sinking, with its last beams, beneath

the western horizon. Thus deeming himself secure from observation, he scrupled not to leave the more retired paths, but even ventured to enter some of the smaller towns, in order to procure more salutary refreshments than the mountainous districts, through which he had hitherto wandered, could afford.

About three leagues from the Castle of Mittewald, and at the edge of those dreary mountains which enclosed it, as it were, in their bosoms, and seemed to separate it from the rest of the universe, stood a small village or town, at the extremity of which, the only defile by which those regions could be penetrated upon that side began. The inhabitants appeared hospitable, and readily offered every assistance to the supposed stranger. Albert, though years had passed since he had visited this place, and then in the company of his father, had not forgot that this place was the frontier of his own hereditary dominions, and, consequently, that he was surrounded
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by his own vassals ; neither was it surprising that the eldest of them should have forgotten the person of a man whom they had never beheld since the bloom of youthful beauty animated his countenance, now disfigured by the cares and hardships he had so lately undergone. Rendered cautious, however, by experience, he determined to conceal himself from their knowledge, in the hope and expectation, that, being ignorant of his real character, he should obtain a better insight into the opinions of those through whose fidelity and assistance he could alone look forward, as the means of retrieving his shattered fortunes. He was the more induced to pursue this conduct, as he knew not to what extent his enemies had proceeded, as it was possible that they might have anticipated his attempt to reach his hereditary dominions, and might have secured such places as were exposed. For the Castle itself, he had no dread. He well knew the strength of the place, and had an implicit faith in

the valour and fidelity of its commander. He therefore determined not to disclose himself, if possible, until he was safe within the walls of that inaccessible fortress. Secure, as he conceived himself, at least for a short time, in his present situation, it became an object of considerable importance to him, to obtain every possible intelligence respecting any reports that might have been circulated in the neighbourhood. For this purpose he sought the company of such of the inhabitants whom he deemed the most intelligent; and, affecting to be a total stranger to the country, which he gave out that he was passing through, in a journey to a distant province, he artfully adverted to the Castle of Mittewald.

“I have been informed,” said he, addressing an elderly man, who, with an hospitality that bespoke the genuine feelings of philanthropy, had proffered to his unknown chief the accommodation of his little cottage, “that not far from hence is a castle, so insulated by the mountains, and

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so far from any tract usually frequented by travellers, as scarcely ever to be noticed. Indeed, from the variety of strange reports which are circulated respecting it, if a tenth part of them are to be credited, I cannot wonder at its being abandoned. For my own part, I confess myself to be one of those incredulous beings who place but little faith in such stories ; yet, in the present instance, I rather feel my curiosity excited. Can you, my friend, inform me how such strange and incoherent reports as are every where circulated, have obtained so great a degree of credit ?”

At this question, though apparently asked in the most casual manner, the old man turned his eyes upon the inquirer, with such a scrutinizing gaze as to cause a sudden alteration in the countenance of Albert, who, fearful of being detected, added, before an answer could be given to his question, “ But perhaps my request is improper. Let it therefore be forgotten, as I should ill deserve the hospitality which I have ex-

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perienced,

perienced, was I, by any indiscreet wish of mine, to endeavour to pry into secrets, which perhaps policy, or the peremptory orders of the chief of the district, have deemed necessary to be concealed from general knowledge."

" I perceive," replied his host, " that you noticed the earnest manner in which I could not, at the moment, avoid looking at you ; but you have mistaken the impulse that occasioned it. No state policy seals our lips, neither has our chief forbade our free conversation upon the subject of those reports which are so industriously circulated. Indeed, many years have elapsed since Mittewald Castle has been honoured with the presence of its master ; neither has the present chief, at least to the knowledge of his vassals, visited any part of these, his hereditary domains, since, at about the age of fifteen, he left them to attend his father to the imperial court ; nor should I suppose he is now likely to return to this dreary spot, since we hear
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he has lately obtained a large principality, over which he reigns supreme. To confess the truth, a vague recollection, that I had seen features similar to yours, involuntarily made me guilty of rudeness; but the impression is so faint, that I consider it merely as the weakness of old age, apt, perhaps, to fancy what would give it pleasure to realize."

It was with the utmost difficulty that Albert could disguise his feelings during this explanation. The natural garrulity, however, of his host, who was intent upon making the apology, proved his friend, and he regained composure sufficient to enter into a conversation with him, upon the subject in which he was most interested. To his infinite surprise, he found that the visit of Martuccio to the Castle was unknown; but although by this he was disappointed in ascertaining whether the Princess had arrived there, yet it gave him this satisfaction, that if she was, the business had been con-

ducted with such consummate art and secrecy as almost to bid defiance to discovery.

As soon as he had obtained every intelligence that was possible, Albert became anxious to depart; yet he judged it necessary still to conceal his rank, and his intention of going to the Castle. The latter could only be accomplished by leaving the village in the night, as it would be next to an impossibility for him to enter the defile which led to it by day, without being discovered by some of the inhabitants. As soon, therefore, as he perceived that sleep had closed the eyelids of his venerable host, he, with the utmost caution, left the cottage, having previously placed upon the solitary table an ample remuneration for the civilities which he had received. All was silent, and, fortunately for his enterprize, the moon had risen unclouded, and promised to guide him, by its glimmering lights, through the intricacies of those passes which led to the Castle. Years, as has been before

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observed, had passed away since his footsteps had trod the paths of those mountains, yet the eccentric grandeur of the scene had made so great an impression upon his youthful mind, that he found but little difficulty in ascertaining the right tract ; and scarcely had the sun displayed its first beams, ere he found himself within sight of the massy pile. Upon his arrival at the cottage appropriated for travellers, he determined to rest a few hours, as he found himself much fatigued by the labour which he had undergone ; and its inhabitants, unconscious of the rank of their visitor, hastily prepared the chamber of repose. Throwing himself upon the couch, he courted the refreshing balsam of sleep. In vain, however, he attempted to repose his wearied limbs. The agitation of his mind, fluctuating in all the uncertainty of hope and fear, forbade the enjoyment of rest ; and, no longer able to bear the conflict of contending passions, he hastily arose, and rushing towards the drawbridge, gave the well-known signal.

Roberto, upon retiring from the apartments of the Princess of Clagenfurth, was determined to lose no time in the commencement of his intended search. He immediately, therefore, sent for an officer in the Castle, in whom he could place the strictest confidence, in order to consult him upon the measures it would be most prudent to pursue, in order to render the investigation of effect. While thus intently employed, the signal was heard from the drawbridge, and repeated by the sentinel, in the manner especially appointed upon the arrival of the chief himself, or some accredited messenger from him. Its sound startled the generous Roberto, as he thought that Martuccio might possibly be returned, with full powers to supersede him in the command of the Castle, and of course in the protection of Adeline; and he secretly determined, if possible, not to admit him. It was necessary, however, he should attend to the signal. He accordingly, after having dismissed the officer with whom he had been conversing,

conversing, and given him some orders relative to the business they had been canvassing, hastened to obey the signal; but scarce had he passed the threshold of his apartment, than he was met by one of the sentinels, who informed him, that a person of a noble and majestic mien demanded immediate admittance. This description hurried him forward, as he now judged that it might be Albert himself. Several years had elapsed since Roberto had seen his chief; yet, although age, and the hardships which he had so lately undergone, had materially altered his appearance, yet the same nobleness of countenance was sufficient to prove his identity, and the astonished Roberto hastened to admit his chief into the interior of the Castle; but before this faithful servant could even pay the due obeisance, Albert, in a hurried tone, inquired if the Princess Adeline was arrived?

The question surprised Roberto, as he made no doubt but that Martuccio had apprized the Prince of the safe arrival of the Princess,

Princess, and which had occasioned the journey of the chief. The answer, however, seemed to remove a load of anxiety from the mind of Albert, who complaining of fatigue, commanded that all ceremony should be dispensed with, and desired, now that he was satisfied with the safety of the Princess, that he might occupy any chamber that had been inhabited, in order to take that repose which he had lately been deprived of; adding, that he had much to inquire ere he announced his arrival to the Princess, to whom, as well as to his own family, he expressly commanded it should be kept secret. Neither was this a matter attended with any difficulty, as his person was totally unknown to Madalen and Agnes, to whom he was to be announced only as an officer belonging to Albert. Having given these directions, he retired to an apartment which had been prepared for him, leaving Roberto in great astonishment at the sudden and unaccountable appearance of his chief, unattended even by a confidential servant.

Notwithstanding,

Notwithstanding, however, the prohibition which he had received, as he was sensible that the discretion of the Princess might be trusted, he resolved to apprise her of the unexpected arrival of Albert, that she might compose her spirits sufficiently to prepare for the interview which he doubted not but that the impatience of Albert would seek on the morrow. He accordingly returned to the apartment where he had left the Princess ; and having in vain endeavoured to make himself heard, he concluded that, fatigued with the exertions of the morning, she was either retired, and had fallen asleep, or else had taken the opportunity of enjoying the refreshing breezes that ameliorated the heat of the sun, by visiting some of her favourite walks.

The arrival of Albert necessarily postponed the intended search of Roberto, who, although he was satisfied of the necessity of a speedy investigation, felt alarmed when he thought of the conjectures formed by the Princess of Clagenfurth. His duty to
his

his Prince peremptorily demanded of him that he should give him the earliest information possible of the mysterious circumstance; nay, he deemed it of still greater importance, since he found that Martuccio had never returned to render any account of his commission. From some secret observations which he had made, Roberto mistrusted the sincerity of Martuccio, and his suspicions now suggested that he might possibly have gained a knowledge of some secret entrance, and had contrived to conceal himself in the uninhabited part, for some purpose inimical to the future peace and welfare of the Princess. Never had the generous mind of Roberto experienced such perplexity as during the hours which his chief had devoted to rest. Even the company of his family failed in their accustomed success, to overcome the anxiety under which he so evidently laboured, since the arrival of that supposed messenger from Albert. From the strict secrecy observed, they judged that
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it had some connexion with the future destiny of their amiable friend, the Princess Adeline; and both Madalen and Agnes trembled at the uncertainty of her fate. In vain they made inquiries of the father; but he, who had ever been the foremost in endeavouring to chase all anxiety from their bosoms, now added to it, sometimes by a determined silence, or else by a harsh command to desist from inquiries which his duty forbade him to answer.

A conduct so totally different to that which for years they had been accustomed to, and was the solace of their lives, was but ill calculated to allay their fears. Roberto saw their distress, and the being unable to alleviate it, added to the torments of his own bosom. Thus passed the day, until the hour arrived when it was the custom of Agnes to attend the Princess. Upon this occasion she requested the company of her mother, who looked at Roberto for permission. "Go," said he, understanding the appeal, "and inform the Princess that
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a messenger is arrived from Albert, who will most probably request an audience of her to-morrow. In the mean time, tell her it is my earnest request that she will condescend to admit me to her presence this evening for a few minutes, upon business of the utmost importance."

Madalen and Agnes left Roberto, in order to pay their duty to Adeline. Accustomed to enter her apartments without ceremony, they proceeded through the antichamber which led to that in which she usually sat, and where they expected to have found her engaged, as was her usual practice at that hour, in reading some favourite author, not merely to pass away the time, but with the laudable ambition of obtaining information, and improving her mind by the comments of those learned writers who had spent the best part of their lives in the endeavour of disseminating useful knowledge to those whose time was either occupied by other pursuits, or whose capacities were by nature incapable

capable of forming a correct judgment of sciences, which required not only intense application, but whose meaning, frequently couched beneath the pleasing disguise of allegory and romance, was rendered difficult to be fathomed by any one not possessed of very superior genius. They were rather surprised when they perceived that she was absent, and that there was no appearance of her having been engaged in her favourite study, as the books remained in their proper places, without having in appearance been displaced. They were fearful that she had found herself indisposed, and had retired to her bedchamber, without awaiting her usual attendance. In silence therefore they stole to the door, which they opened with the utmost caution, lest they should disturb her, should she have composed herself to rest. To their surprise, not unmixed with terror, they found that the room was uninhabited, neither was there the least appearance that the Princess had been in it since the morning. Every thing

thing was in the same order, even to the clothes which she had worn the preceding day. For some time they looked upon each other in silent consternation, as if questioning in what manner they should act. A contrariety of ideas prevented them from coming to a decision. They recalled to their memory the long conversation which Roberto had been engaged in with her during the morning, his subsequent anxiety, and particularly the arrival of the stranger, at a moment so critical; and while their thoughts dwelt upon this subject, they scarcely dared admit the suspicions to which they gave rise; yet, could they harbour a thought injurious to that parent, whose constant endeavours had been to instil into their minds the duty which they owed to the unfortunate? Impossible! the idea was discharged as soon as formed; yet, impelled by the same motive, they called upon her by name. No answer was returned, except by the echo of their own voices through the adjoining passages. Terrified at so unaccountable

countable an absence, and at an hour so unseasonable, for twilight had began to spread itself over the face of the earth, while the moon, just rising, darted her pallid beams through the high-arched windows, they hastily sought Roberto, who, during their absence, had been endeavouring to collect his scattered thoughts, in order to regulate his actions in such a manner as to prove himself a friend to the Princess of Clagenfurth, while, at the same time, he preserved his loyalty to his chieftain. Their entrance aroused him from the train of thought in which his mind was enveloped; but, immediately perceiving the consternation so expressively depicted in their countenances, he hastily demanded if the Princess was ill?

It was some time before either Madalen or Agnes could recover their speech sufficiently, to make him understand that the Princess was absent from her apartments, and could no where be found.

Roberto had risen from his seat upon the
first

first entrance of his wife and daughter ; but upon receiving the dreadful intelligence, the roseate hue gave place to a deathlike paleness, and it was with difficulty he could support himself, so great was the shock which his nerves experienced, at a circumstance which, if verified, was fraught with calamities of a nature he dared not investigate. Immediate action, however, was necessary, and that before the appearance of Albert. Commanding, therefore, both his wife and daughter to accompany him, he hastened to the apartments of the Princess. Every place and every avenue was searched, and the sentinel upon guard strictly examined ; but in vain was all inquiry—not the smallest clue could be gained by which her disappearance could be traced.

The apartments which had been allotted for the use of the Princess had been selected, not only for the pleasantness of their situation, but also for her greater security, as no one could possibly enter, or leave them, without passing by two sentinels

nels stationed at the head of a flight of steps leading to that part of the Castle, through which there was formerly a communication with the deserted apartments of the northern side; but this passage had been long closed up, by doors of an immense size, strongly barricaded with iron and wooden bolts of a peculiar construction, which bade defiance to almost any force. From the evidence of the sentinels, it was certain that no one had passed, either to or from these apartments, since the morning when Roberto left the Princess, until the entrance of Madalen and Agnes; and in this intermediate time they had perceived the Princess at the window which overlooked that part of the domains.

Terror was now added to astonishment; but Roberto, who had recovered his usual presence of mind, commanded the females to retire for the present, charging them at the same time to make no comments upon an occasion so inexplicable and extraordinary.

nary. The sentinels were also commanded to remain steady upon their posts until personally discharged by him, even should the time of their usual relief happen before that period. These wise precautions Roberto deemed absolutely necessary, in order to convince Albert of the fidelity of his menials; for, being well acquainted with the temper of his chief, he made little doubt, but that upon receiving the intelligence, his fury would at first rage untroubled; neither could he insure his own safety; could he, however, parry the primary ebullitions of his rage, he was sensible that he should be safe. It became, however, absolutely necessary, that notwithstanding his prohibition of not being disturbed, he should instantly be made acquainted with the disappearance of Adeline, at a juncture so extremely critical as to give even an unprejudiced judge, ignorant of attending circumstances, some reason to suspect a collusion. Scarcely knowing in what manner he should apologize for his intrusion,

intrusion, or how he should introduce a subject of so delicate a nature, Roberto repaired to the chamber which had been allotted for the temporary repose of his chief, whose sleep, if it might be so called, had been disturbed by a succession of dreams, all tending to add terror and dismay to a heart already deeply wounded by the shafts of calamity; at one moment, Adeline appeared to him as when, glowing in youthful beauty, he saw his rival, the Prince of Clagenfurth, receive her hand from her venerable father, the old Count De Mountfort; and, when urged by the resistless impulse of passion, he seemed to clasp the lovely maiden to his heart, he found in his embrace an hideous skeleton; while peals of laughter broke forth from the numerous attendants, as if enjoying his disappointment. Scarcely had this fantastic vision passed away, than, seemingly propelled by an invisible power, he was plunged into a dungeon beneath the walls of the Castle, where, reclined upon the bare ground, the

flinty rock her only pillow, the object of his adoration lay, serene in conscious virtue; while Martuccio, his late highly-favoured minion, stood over her with a drawn dagger in his hand, flattering and threatening her by turns, in order to induce her to share with him those riches which the misplaced generosity of his master had bestowed upon him; but a smile of ineffable disdain seemed to awe the daring wretch; and Albert, unable to bear any longer so humiliating a scene, rushed, unarmed, to seize the wily villain. At that instant the same awful form, that in his earlier days had denounced the fate which awaited him, seemed to rise between them, and arrested his purposed vengeance; then casting upon him a look fraught with peculiar meaning, exclaimed—"Fate permits not vice to punish vice; a heart more pure than Albert's can alone revenge the injuries of the Princess of Clagenfurth. Already is vengeance awake; already are its ministers preparing the means, secret, but infallible; nor can the

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the boasted art of human wisdom frustrate the just decisions of an all-powerful destiny. Still, Albert, it is not too late; once more thy guardian genius, the prophetic sibyl, warns thee of the dangers by which thou art surrounded; still shall an opportunity be given to redeem thy lost fame, and to fulfil the remainder of the prophecy. Seize the precious boon; once past, it vanishes never to return, and the name of the victorious Albert, so long the admiration of surrounding nations, will be buried in oblivion, or remembered only as an awful monument to future princes to restrain that most destructive passion, *revenge*, and ever to temper victory with mercy."

Slowly waving her ebony wand, the hoary sibyl vanished from his sight. The agitation occasioned by this solemn injunction chased from the eyes of Albert the unpleasant slumber which he had indulged in, at the very instant when, cautiously opening the door, Roberto made his appearance. There was an expression in his features

which, added to the recollection of his dream, prepared him for some uncommon intelligence; and so much was his mind occupied by the visionary scenes that still floated upon the surface of his ideas, that before the trembling castellan could give utterance to his words, Albert hastily exclaimed—"Fly instantly, and snatch my adored Adeline from the power of the base Martuccio."

"My liege," cried Roberto, starting in wild amaze, "by what supernatural means have you become acquainted that it is Martuccio who has concealed the Princess? or how——" Roberto was proceeding, but Albert, starting from his couch, seized him by the arm, and, while every limb seemed to tremble with emotion, he demanded, in a voice scarcely articulate, an explanation of his question; adding, in a gentler accent, "Roberto, my spirits have been sadly agitated by a dream, which portrayed the Princess of Clagenfurth in the power of Martuccio; when, eager to rescue her
from

from the dungeon in which she was confined, that awful directress of my fate, the prophetic sibyl, appeared, and again denounced my future fortune. Suddenly I awoke, and uttered, I scarcely know what; but your reply, or rather question, bears such an affinity to those ideas which have tormented my sleeping thoughts, that I am prepared to hail you as the messenger of intelligence fatal to my future repose. Speak, and whatsoever the intelligence may be, let truth be the sole guide of your tongue. Your chief, Roberto, has already suffered too much, to shrink from any calamity that may now befall him. Dread not the effect your intelligence may cause; I have nearly learnt (a dear-bought lesson) the folly of expecting that happiness is the constant attendant upon unlimited power. Your fidelity is too firmly rooted in my breast, to be suspected by adventitious circumstances; speak then freely, and ease me of the torments I endure."

Roberto, reassured by the generous sentiments

timents of his chief, no longer hesitated to obey his orders, and minutely informed him of every circumstance that had taken place, from the first arrival of the Princess to that present moment.

Albert heard the intelligence with a calmness that created the greatest astonishment in Roberto; during the time, he was attentive and seemed wrapt up in reflection, and on the conclusion, without making any comment, he commanded him to attend him to the apartments of the Princess. Previous, however, to his taking this step, as secrecy was no longer necessary, his arrival at the Castle was formally announced; and although each individual wondered at the mysterious conduct of their chief, they prudently concealed their opinions to themselves.

The news of the disappearance of the Princess soon spread through the confined circle of Mittewald Castle, and the original tales of superstition, which time had almost buried in oblivion, were again revived
with

with additional force. Upon the arrival of Albert and Roberto at the suite of rooms which had been appropriated for the accommodation of the Princess, the former examined every part with the greatest attention; but no visible means of egress could be discovered. To the questions he separately put to those who had been accustomed to attend upon the Princess, for both Madalen and Agnes had been ordered to attend the Prince upon this occasion, answers sufficiently indicative, that by whatever means Adeline had been conveyed from her apartment, both Roberto and his family were free from any connivance, were given, and even the chief himself testified his full approbation of their general conduct.

The nature of Albert, however, seemed, as if by magic, to have undergone a total change; instead of giving way to that rage which was so much dreaded by his vassals, he now appeared calm, but absorbed in the deepest thought. His mind seemed ab-

stracted from every surrounding object ; while his menials, gazing in silence, were unwilling to interrupt the current of his thoughts, lest the unexpected calm should change into a storm.

Roberto felt more anxious than ever to acquaint his chief with the appearance of the mysterious strangers in the northern apartments, a circumstance which he had purposely omitted in the general account which he had previously given relative to the Princess, as he fancied they had some connexion with her disappearance. Perceiving the bent of his chief's disposition, and that the further attendance, either of the menials or his own family, might be dispensed with, he determined to take the present opportunity ; dismissing them, with the strictest orders that they should maintain a total silence upon every occurrence which they had witnessed, until such time as the Prince should have come to a resolution in what manner it would be proper to act.

Thus

Thus alone with his chief, who tacitly acquiesced in all the orders of Roberto, the latter ventured to break in upon his meditations, by acquainting him that he had circumstances of the utmost importance to relate, rendered more so by the extraordinary disappearance of the Princess, with whose removal, it was more than probable, they had a connexion. This intelligence roused Albert from his reverie; but ere Roberto could proceed upon his intended narrative, the Prince, whose spirits seemed unusually depressed, losing sight of that proud distinction of rank which he had always most scrupulously adhered to, seized the astonished castellan by the hand, and in a tone that bespoke the accent of a friend, rather than of a master, exclaimed—

“ Years, Roberto, have flown away since last we parted; alas! what calamities has your Prince experienced since that period! Buried within the recesses of these mountains, perhaps the occurrences of these last twelve months are still unknown to the inhabitants

N 5

habitants of Mittewald." Roberto confessed they were, as even Martuccio had given them no other information than that his chief had made himself master of the principality of Clagenfurth; and Adeline had always avoided conversation upon the subject.

A sigh, that seemed to proceed from the deepest resource, escaped Albert, who hastily added—"Yes, and you now see that boasted conqueror a proscribed fugitive, and hunted after like the beasts of the field."

It was not astonishment alone, but a combination of every feeling, that shone conspicuous in the countenance of the generous Roberto, at a declaration so totally unexpected. Falling at the feet of his unhappy chief, the gushing tear flowed down his manly cheek, and as soon as he could find utterance for his words, he most solemnly swore never to desert him, but to sacrifice his life, if necessary, in his service. Albert raised Roberto, and pressing him in his arms with the greatest affection, inter-

rupted the effusions of his zeal, which were too sincere to be misunderstood. Desiring him to be seated, he in a few words related every occurrence which had taken place, and reminded him of the original prophecy that had denounced his fate; not disguising the prompt and decisive vengeance which he had experienced, in consequence of his having given a free rein to the united and all-subduing passions of love and revenge. "It is not," continued Albert, "unknown to you, Roberto, with what earnestness I incessantly endeavoured to obtain the affections of the lovely Adeline, notwithstanding her proud aspiring mind deigned not to listen to my vows; while those of the detested Clagenfurth were received with smiles of joy and happiness. How often have I been tempted to plunge the dagger to his unsuspecting heart, when, blessed with the extatic prospect opening to his view, he has left the apartments of his beloved Adeline to hold sweet converse with her in his dreams! Frequently has it
N 6 glittered

glittered half unsheathed in my hand, when a friendly beam, darting its pallid rays upon it, has caused a revulsion in my thoughts, and seemed to denounce me an assassin. For a time, honour, and the claims due to knighthood, conquered. You well know, though pressed by the generous old Count De Mountfort, in a manner I scarcely knew how to parry, to assist at the nuptials, that I left his hospitable roof, some days previous to the event which gave the lovely Adeline to the detested Rodolphus; but from that moment I determined upon taking a severe revenge for disappointed love. In order, however, to render it more secure, I changed my mode of behaviour, and instead of constantly resisting the entreaties of the unsuspecting De Mountfort, or his son-in-law, the Prince of Clagenfurth, I suffered myself to pay the bridal visit, offering such plausible excuses for my absence at the ceremony, as could not fail of being accepted, turning the supposed neglect into the highest compliment. Although

I perceived

I perceived that De Mountfort and Clagenfurth were the easy dupes of my deceptive conduct, and readily believed that my expressions and heart were in unison with each other, I soon found that the Princess was not so easily misled. She received my attentions, it is true, in public, with that affability and grace which has justly rendered her name supereminent above her contemporaries; but if, when an opportunity offered, (and from the intimacy which subsisted, many unavoidably occurred) I ventured to hint the torments I still experienced at an unrequited passion, her eyes sufficiently explained the sensations of her heart; while, with a dignified silence, she would press the portrait of her beloved Rodolphus closer to her breast, and leave me to curse the moments when I could be so weak as to give way to a passion so derogatory to honour and friendship.

“Tired with so fruitless a pursuit, yet with love unabated, and a determination more resolute than ever to possess the object

ject of my adoration, or perish gloriously in the attempt, I at length left the court of Rodolphus; having previously made myself master of the sentiments of many malcontents, who, notwithstanding the numerous and conspicuous virtues of their reigning sovereigns, were jealous of the ascendancy which the house of De Mounfort, already one of the most powerful in Germany, had acquired by thus engrafting a bud of it upon the tree of Clagenfurth. Thus divided within itself, I fancied that the conquest of the whole principality would not be attended with much difficulty, as I knew I could easily raise a body of troops, whose services were entirely devoted to me, besides sending for some of my hereditary vassals. Reasons for declaring war were easily found, and Fortune favoured me with one, which was not only plausible, but which, it was probable, would attach many of the inhabitants of the principality to my side. But it is unnecessary to enter upon this detail; suffice it, that it
was

was undertaken, and succeeded. Would that it had failed, or that the demon of revenge had slumbered in his unfathomable cell! Such, Roberto, are the misfortunes which have hurled thy chief from the pinnacle of glory, and plunged him into the abyss of disgrace, to hide his head within the walls of Mittewald."

Roberto, who, it has frequently been observed, was free from any superstitious enthusiasm, listened in attentive and respectful silence to the recital of his chief; and although his mind, ever constant in the disbelief of supernatural agency, sought to explain, with satisfaction to himself, those passages which tended to inculcate such a doctrine, still he was constrained to confess his inability of accounting for many of the transactions which had passed. He judged, however, that the fate of Albert was at its crisis; and in order to fulfil his duty, and to put his chief in possession of every clue by which he might discover the machinations of his enemies, for to them
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he attributed the whole mysterious system which was acted upon, he minutely related the discovery made by the Princess of Clagenfurth, her subsequent illness, and the measures which he was on the point of arranging, in order to search the northern apartments of the Castle, at the instant when the signal from the drawbridge announced his chief. He cautiously, however, avoided giving any hint of the ideas which Adeline had entertained in respect to the identity of the strangers; for although he believed that the mind of his chief was chastened by misfortune, yet he prudently judged that the reformation was of too recent a date to sustain so great a load of forbearance, as even the hint that the young Rodolphus might soon be in his power would force upon him.

This intelligence seemed to excite far greater emotion in the mind of Albert than he experienced at the information of the loss of Adeline, even when, flying on the wings of love and expectation, he
deemed

deemed himself on the point of possessing the reward which he had looked forward to as an ample compensation for all his past misfortunes.

The mind of Albert, when divested of passion and unclouded by prejudice, was capacious and extended. Quick of apprehension, he timely foresaw every probable circumstance, and in general, by a prompt and vigorous exertion of those faculties which he so pre-eminently possessed, he succeeded in averting the impending storm, which threatened, though at a distance, at some future time to overwhelm him. The information given by Roberto, was to him of much greater consequence than, on a superficial view, might be supposed. It alarmed him for the total demolition of that dernier resort from the power or the malice of his enemies, which, if once he could reach the Castle of Mittewald, he had flattered himself he should then possess, and even at some favourable moment might make some efforts to reinstate himself in his lost possessions.

sessions. From the account now received, and indeed from the sudden disappearance of the Princess, it was evident that a communication, unknown to the right possessors of the Castle, existed between the northern apartments and the mountains, as also, though overlooked, between those apartments and the suite inhabited by the Princess; and this it was essentially necessary he should ascertain, although his mind laboured in uncertainty in what manner he should begin the inquiry. Roberto perceived that his chief appeared more agitated than before, and respectfully inquired the cause, again repeating, in the most solemn manner, his vows of attachment.

Albert, who had ever been sensible of his worth, was, if possible, upon this occasion, more attached to him; and he scrupled not to entrust him with the plans which he had originally formed, but which this recent discovery threatened entirely to overthrow. Although, upon a full development of his intentions, Roberto perceived
some

some part of them which would militate most strongly against the interests of the Princess of Clagenfurth, yet, trusting that in an undertaking of so complicated a nature, unforeseen and unexpected occurrences might arise, which would tend in some measure to reconcile the jarring interests, he entered unconditionally, and with the greatest alacrity, into the views of his chief; and as they judged that no time was to be lost, especially as the arrival of Albert at the Castle was now generally known, and would doubtless put the intruders more upon their guard, it was determined to prosecute the search without delay.

While these transactions passed in the inhabited part of the Castle, the unhappy Princess was confined in a dark and dreary dungeon beneath the centre of its walls; the rapidity with which she had been hurried by the unknown ravisher through the secret passages, had, joined to terror, thrown her into a state of insensibility, from which she

she recovered only to be convinced of the wretchedness of her situation. On opening her eyes, she cast them on the person who had committed this outrage, and who stood beside her. His visage was uncovered, and by the pale glimmering light which the grating afforded her, she, to her utmost dismay, perceived the countenance of Martuccio. A violent shriek told him that he was recognized; but the next moment saw her again consigned to her former state of insensibility. The hardened wretch, terrified at the situation to which she was reduced, and fearful lest he should lose the prize which he had taken so much pains to obtain, bore her from the dungeon where he had first placed her, to one where, as a freer circulation of air diffused itself around, the senses of the Princess became gradually restored. But in order to account for the perpetration of so daring an act, it is necessary to give some intelligence respecting the principal concerned, and the motives that induced him to turn the imprisonment

ment of the Princess of Clagenfurth to his own advantage.

Martuccio, to a natural genius that rarely falls to the lot of one man, joined a mind of unbounded ambition, which was, however, qualified by such a temperament of action, that while he was in reality in the pursuit of his own purposes, he could appear not only the zealous friend, but pliant tool of another. By birth he was, as has already been observed, an Italian, and had the misfortune to be a younger brother of a noble house in the dutchy of Mantua, with little for his fortune, except his sword. He was by nature jealous and revengeful; yet he endeavoured by every means in his power to check the latter passion, as strongly militating against the future prospect which he had pourtrayed for himself, and which, could it have been brought to perfection, would raise him from that obscurity which the scantiness of his fortune seemed to have plunged him into, to honours little inferior to the pomp of ducal grandeur.

grandeur. One unfortunate moment, however, destroyed for ever his glittering views, and sent him, execrated and abandoned, even by his friends and nearest relatives, a perpetual outlaw from the Mantuan territories. This extreme rigour was occasioned by the assassination of his elder brother, who, it was too certain, and indeed it was admitted by him, fell by his hand. It was in vain, however, that he pleaded ignorance of the person by whom he was attacked, as he was one evening leaving the house of a female, with whom he long secretly carried on an intrigue. Unfortunately for Martuccio, it was known that the two brothers bore an almost implacable enmity against each other; and consequently the world conjectured that he had taken the first plausible opportunity that offered of getting rid of the only obstacle which existed between himself and immense riches; and, as assassinations were most common where females were concerned, he trusted that the loss of his brother

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ther (though he was actually ignorant who his antagonist was, until after the fatal stroke had been given) would be attributed to some of those numerous bravoës who are hired upon the occasion. But of this hope he soon found himself deprived; the murder had been seen by one who knew Martuccio well, but who was too late to prevent it; and even the unfortunate victim himself lived long enough to recognize his brother, who was not disguised in the person of the assassin. It was with the utmost difficulty that his disconsolate father, bowed down with age and anguish, could contrive his escape, lest he should, in undergoing a proper punishment for his crime, add a still greater disgrace to his family, whose honour and probity had ever been untainted, by the awful ceremony of a public execution. Thus abandoned by his nearest relatives, and shunned by those whom he had esteemed his friends, he was obliged to leave his native country, and
seek

seek in a foreign climate, that home which was denied him in his own.

END OF VOL. III

THE

BLACK BANNER.

MANY, and of various kinds, were the adventures which for years chequered the life of a being thus deserted ; but though they were painful, yet they served to steel his mind against the shafts of adversity. At length he fell into the hands of a set of banditti, the most ferocious of their kind, who bade defiance to all laws, nor ever suffered a prisoner to escape, but either obliged him to enter into their society, or to bid an eternal adieu to liberty, or more frequently to life itself. Far different were the band with whom Martuccio

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found himself obliged to associate, to those whom Berthold had, by management and address, converted into being the protectors of the country, instead of its terror; murder and rapine were the watch-words of the former, mercy and security, of the latter. The Castle of Mittewald, deserted by its owners, was an object of attention to these marauders; and the superstition with which it was beheld by the neighbourhood, was favourable to their designs. With indefatigable industry, joined to intelligence which they held with one of their band, who had been ordered to enlist himself beneath the banners of the commandant at Mittewald, they had contrived an entrance into the northern part, the opening of which into the country was at so great a distance, and so concealed by nature, that even if discovered, no one, unconnected with its contrivers, could have imagined that it had any connexion with the Castle itself. Here for some time Martuccio resided, until death, and
other

other accidents, had so reduced the banditti, as to oblige them, for their individual safety, to separate and to leave the country. He was once more cast upon the wide world, and, destitute of every resource, he resolved to return to Italy, trusting that time, and the alteration which his manner of life had made in his person, would be a sufficient security from being recognized; but a very short period put an end to this hope. A few days after he had entered the suburbs of Mantua, he was startled by meeting a person whom he instantly recognized as one of their former society at Mittewald. This man, previous to the dissolution of the band, which however was no secret to him, had been left for dead in an engagement with some travellers, and as he never returned to the place of general rendezvous, they supposed he was actually killed. Fortune, however, had been more favourable to him; for an elderly peasant, who lived in the neighbourhood where this rencontre

had taken place, and who, although unseen himself, had beheld the whole transaction, no sooner found that both parties made a precipitate retreat, leaving their dead as a prey to the wild beasts of the forest, than, actuated by a genuine feeling of humanity, he hastened to discover if there were any remains of life in the unfortunate being who seemed to have paid the forfeit due to his crimes. Upon raising him from the ground, he found a slight pulsation, which convinced him, that although life was not quite extinct, yet that it hung upon a very precarious balance; prompt assistance might, however, he thought, recover him; therefore laying him gently upon the bank, having previously staunched his wounds as well as he was able, he returned to the cottage, which was at no great distance; and having briefly told his son-in-law the claims upon their humanity, they both hastened to the assistance of the wounded bandit, taking with them some cordials he was fortunately possessed of,
and

and every other article which they had that could be of any assistance upon the occasion. It was not the bandit who, perhaps, but an hour before had been the terror of their nearest friends, that they deemed required their aid; no, it was a fellow-creature in distress, and apparently in the agonies of death, going, with all his sins unrepented, to that "*bourne from which no traveller returns.*" To their great joy they found him so far recovered as to open his eyes, which seemed to thank them for their kindness, though his tongue denied utterance for his thoughts: with some difficulty they conveyed him to the cottage, where, by time and good treatment, his wounds were healed, and his health recovered. His success in saving the life of a fellow-creature gave the greatest satisfaction both to the old man and his son; but the reward they received was, in their estimation, superior to thousands of silver or of gold. As soon as the bandit found himself sufficiently restored so as to con-

verse with his kind hosts, he took the opportunity of thanking his benefactors, in terms so expressive and unexpected, as even to bring tears down the furrowed cheeks of age.—“ It is not for my life only,” said the bandit, “ that I thank you, but that, under the guidance of Providence, you are the blessed instruments of saving my soul.” Perceiving the astonishment which his observation excited, he gave them a brief account of the manner in which he became forced to assume his late mode of life, which he most solemnly asserted had always been held in the highest detestation by him ; he hoped, therefore, that they would perfect the good work which they had begun, by pointing out to him some means of procuring an honest livelihood, where he might have leisure to repent of those deeds which necessity, and the innate love of life, which on a refusal would have been forfeited, had alone forced him to carry into execution. It might perhaps be difficult to determine
which

which of the parties experienced the greatest satisfaction—the one in feeling himself the unexpected instrument of saving perhaps a soul hovering upon the verge of perdition; or the other, in escaping from a set of men constantly jealous of each other, and involved in every species of wickedness; added to which, the happy prospect of a future maintenance, proceeding from the efforts of industry, and conducted by the precepts of honour and honesty, was tendered for his acceptance. The appeal made so pointedly to the heart of the old man, could not fail of producing the desired effect, and the happy bandit was from that instant an inmate of the family, and was employed by the son-in-law of his benefactor in the superintendence of a large manufactory, which, by his industry and great attention, he had improved so much as, at the time we now allude to, to have been allotted an equal share of its profits. This man it was who, recognizing Martuccio in

the suburbs, silently followed him, until finding an opportunity, when they could not be observed, he said—"Although my good fortune has long separated me from the band we mutually belonged to, but which I find is since dissolved, yet the oath I once swore, of warning any individual of any danger which threatens him, my conscience tells me still exists. I am now in affluence, and have long since known the value of attaching myself to virtue, and making it my guide; it is even that principle that now forcibly compels me to save you, just hovering on the very precipice of destruction; haste then, Martuccio, take this purse and fly instantly; your arrival in the suburbs is already known, and before the morning dawns, the prison of Mantua will for ever shut you from the light of day; your father is no more, and your enemies triumph in the possession of your fortune."

Having given this information, his old comrade suddenly disappeared without
awaiting

awaiting any reply; and Martuccio, to whom all parts of the world were equal, deemed it most prudent to take his advice, since no where could he recognize the voice of friendship.

In this disposition he arrived upon the confines of the principality of Clagenfurth, and having, with his usual art and caution, made a minute inquiry into the temper and disposition of its inhabitants, he thought that in the mind of Albert he could perceive a disposition fluctuating between hope and fear; and that the threats, and subsequent escape of Theodore and Sternhein at the same time, as it considerably embarrassed the chief, so also it afforded a greater facility to himself of being not only useful, but even absolutely necessary to him. For the discernment of Martuccio easily perceived that Albert, although he had achieved a conquest that added a brilliancy to his former laurels, was deficient in the art of securing it in such a manner, as to recon-

cile the jarring interests, and regain the affections of those whom his intemperate fury had so justly disgusted. It has already been seen in what a complete manner he succeeded in the attainment of his wishes ; but as experience daily teaches mankind, that even the most cautious, or the most daring, cannot always withstand temptation, or maintain that strict guard over their passions, which is so essentially necessary for the completion of their undertakings, it was the fate of Martuccio to add another example to the vanity of mundane resolutions, when attacked by the incitement of ambition, or by the all-powerful passion of love, which, leveling all distinctions, boldly aims the same deadly point at the prince and the peasant.

This subtle Italian had, upon his first entrance into Clagenfurth, heard much of the beauty of the widowed Princess ; and although he was soon made acquainted with the sentiments of Albert respecting her, and entered with the wily complacency
of

of his character into all the views of his abused master, with an eagerness that placed his sincerity in the fairest point of view, yet he entertained sanguine, though distant hopes, of being able to obtain her for himself. The natural aversion which he doubted not but that she must possess for the conqueror, he deemed considerably in his favour, as he naturally supposed it would be one means, and that a most powerful one, of delaying the hopes of Albert for some length of time, during which his future plans might be arranged, so as to ensure him success. At first the resolutions of the chief to remove her to some other place of security, threatened to overturn the whole of his scheme; yet on reflection, this impediment vanished by the influence of the all-powerful resources of his mind, and he resolved even to turn it to his own advantage. The unsettled state of the principality he was aware could produce no safe asylum for the Princess; and to secure her without interruption,

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interruption, it must be to some distant spot that it would be necessary to remove her. He instantly recollected the deserted Castle of Mittewald, and was about to propose it to Albert, when fortunately, as he judged, he became acquainted that it belonged to him as an hereditary fief. This intelligence caused him to pause, and in some degree to vary his plan. The Castle he well knew was the place of all others where a concealment could be best observed, and to him it was invaluable, as from his former observations, he believed himself to be in possession of secrets belonging to it, which were unknown to any other man; still he wished to appear ignorant that such a spot was in existence, and that the proposal should come from Albert himself; and even this his usual ingenuity found the means of accomplishing.

But no sooner had he so artfully planned the scheme which was to place the Princess in the power of one whom he dared to equal himself to as a rival, than he

turned his attention to the unsettled state of the country, which he had every reason to suppose would prevent the chief from prosecuting his amour for the present, by detaining him at Clagenfurth. He well knew there were many ripe for a revolt, and who wanted only a leader, to declare themselves; these he secretly encouraged, and to this event he looked forward as the time when he might realize the idea which he had lately entertained, and which insensibly grew upon him, of raising himself to the crown of Clagenfurth, and by the possession of its late Princess, give a plausible colour to the enterprizes of the disaffected.

During the important journey from the Convent of St. Veil to Mittewald Castle, the foregoing ideas occupied the principal part of his thoughts, although at times others more decisive entered his imagination; and had it not been for the presence of the monk in the first instance, and the subsequent fortunate encounter
upon

upon the heath, which ultimately forced him to take shelter in the cottage of Sebastian, he had nearly resolved to seize the prize that fortune offered him, and convey the unfortunate Princess far from the knowledge of Albert, or her own powerful friends. But although he for some time entertained such an intention, he totally abandoned it while at the cottage in the forest. The recognition between Sebastian and Martuccio had been mutual, as the former had originally belonged to that set in which he himself had acted a conspicuous part, and from private circumstances, he had no reason to think that Sebastian would follow the example of his Mantuan friend ; this made him more than usually anxious to leave the cottage, as he expected every instant to be detained by his former colleague, in revenge for some private injuries the latter had received at his hands. By the dress of the two brothers, he made no doubt but that they belonged to the troop, the soldiers of which
were

were reported to be so completely civilized by their captain, as to be the defenders rather than the oppressors of injured innocence, and had lost the disgraceful appellation in the mouths of the neighbourhood, of Banditti, in the more dignified one of the Society of Friends. One word from the Princess would therefore undoubtedly have put a final career to his progress, as he would most probably have been doomed by the rigid justice of Berthold to have expiated his daring villainy against the person of the Princess, by a perpetual imprisonment in one of those dreadful dungeons, where formerly every prisoner taken by the banditti in their excursions, were indiscriminately plunged, but which now were solely used for the punishment of malefactors: fearful therefore at being detected, he hastened, as we have already related, to place his charge according to the original plan, and trust to fortune for the rest.

As soon as he had left the Castle of
Mittewald,

Mittewald, upon his return to give an account of his success, so absorbed was he in contemplating his future views, that he had arrived upon the borders of the principality before he was aware of it. Here his attention was arrested by a conversation which he casually heard at a house of refreshment, where he purposed remaining the night, and fortunately, as it proved, he still continued his disguise.

“ Well, comrade,” said a soldier who was just come in, “ this business was settled without much bloodshed ; D’Armfeldt is a brave fellow, and so is that Count Von Werdenberg, and Theodore de Mountfort : but who would have thought that Albert would have given up his new conquest so easily, or run away from his own troops even in the very heat of the engagement ? ”

“ Why, ’twas very odd,” replied the other ; “ but the moment he saw that bloody standard with the black raven on it, he turned tail and rode off through his ranks, as if pursued by a thousand furies ;
and

and they say that he has never been heard of since."

"It's all very true, comrade; and as sure as you are alive, the devil, or some of his emissaries, have got him in their clutches. Don't you remember, when some time ago he killed the raven from the platform, which had perched upon the battlements, only because he croaked rather louder than usual; but," (lowering his voice so as scarcely to be heard, he added) "as sure as you are alive, there was something more than common in that raven; and I do believe that it was the devil in disguise, and now he comes again with the very arrow sticking in him."

Such were the superstitious notions that pervaded the understandings of the ignorant.

During these remarks, however, Martuccio sat in silent amazement; he was afraid to ask any questions, lest he might betray the interest he had in ascertaining the truth of such reports; every moment
his

his situation became more irksome, as every time that the soldiers looked towards him, his cowardly conscience suggested that it was to discover who he was. Unable, however, to bear such restraint upon his patience, he ventured to inquire, to what extent the reports which were circulated in the neighbourhood might be credited; adding, that it was his intention to have visited Clagenfurth, to see a brother, from whom he had been long separated, and who, he had lately heard, was in the service of Albert; "but perhaps," said he, in a careless manner, "it will be more prudent for me to postpone my journey thither, as I should suppose the friends of Albert are either so dispersed, or else are so fearful of shewing themselves, as to render the discovery of an individual, not conspicuous for rank, a task of some difficulty."

The soldiers, who were part of the Chevalier D'Armfeldt's army, and who were proud of the enterprize which they had achieved,

achieved, detailed the whole of the circumstances to the disguised minister of their late Prince, at the same time informing him, "that Clagenfurth itself was more like a city that had enjoyed years of uninterrupted prosperity, than one which had twice, in so short a period, experienced all the horrors of war; for so well regulated are the ordinances of the Chevalier D'Armfeldt, and the Count Von Werdenberg, that every department know their business, and all confusion is avoided. We should, however," continued they, "advise you, as you are a stranger, and a friend of an officer belonging to the Castle, unless necessity compels you, to avoid entering the city at present, as all strangers, of whatsoever condition they may be, are most strictly examined at the gates, and should the smallest suspicion arise against them, they are kept confined until such time as they can find a sufficient security for their good conduct while resident there."

"Indeed,

“ Indeed, my friends, I think I shall take your advice ; for though I have nothing to fear, yet being, as you say, a stranger, I may not be able to give such answers as may be perfectly satisfactory : but say, how came the new governors to be so very strict ? ”

“ I am no politician,” said the soldier who spoke before, “ and therefore trouble myself but little how the great people go on ; but I can’t help hearing what’s said, you know ; and so I hear that they want to catch our Prince’s late minister, Martuccio, I think they call him ; he has run away with the Princess Adeline, they say by Albert’s order ; however, there are large rewards offered for him, dead or alive : ’twould be a noble prize, would it not, comrade ? if we could meet with him, it would go hard if I lost sight of him again.”

“ True,” rejoined the other ; “ only there is some little difficulty in the way, as I believe we have never seen him ; have you, comrade ? ”

“ Why

"Why that's true," replied he; "but extraordinary things sometimes happen when we least experience it. Come, let us drink success to it, however, that will do us no harm: what say you, friend," said he, addressing Martuccio, "will you pledge us?"

If the feelings of Martuccio had been upon the rack before, the present conversation was of a tendency to have given him the *coup de grace*; scarcely knowing what he did, he took the offered beverage, and fearing to excite further suspicion, made a virtue of necessity, and with more energy than he thought it possible to assume, he drank the proffered sentiment, adding, "May your success, my friends, be equal to my wishes; and now, since I know what is going forward, perhaps I may be able to give you some information, which may lead you to obtain the wished for prize."

At this declaration the soldiers became peculiarly attentive, and perceiving the
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can empty, they ordered it to be filled again, as they thought the more the stranger drank, the more communicative he might be. Martuccio easily divined the drift of their generosity, and as readily appeared to acquiesce in their design—"Two days since," began he, "as I was travelling from a village situated at the foot of the Julian Alps, I overtook a person who, as he seemed pursuing the same tract as myself, I willingly joined, hoping to alleviate the tedium of the journey by company. He seemed I thought rather inclined to avoid me, but as he could find no plausible means of excusing himself from continuing with me, at least as far as our road lay together, and from which there was no means of deviating into any other tract, he gradually became more sociable. I soon found that his dress by no means corresponded with his conversation; the former was even inferior to my own; yet there was an expression in his countenance that indicated he
had

had seen better days ; while his discourse, instead of being suited to the station of life I supposed we were both in, was almost too refined and courtierlike for my comprehension. At times I frequently observed him deep in meditation, as if his mind had been employed upon business of consequence ; this however passed off until last night, when as usual we retired to rest ; and whether it was from forgetfulness, or that he had fallen unexpectedly to sleep, I know not, but he omitted to wrap himself up in the coarse plaid which he constantly wore, and which was by some accident displaced. It was then that I became convinced that my suspicions were well-founded, and that he was a person of more consequence than he appeared, for his interior vest, which he had hitherto most carefully concealed, was such as I have seen worn by people of the highest rank ; and by his side also, which I now first discovered, likewise hung a sword, apparently of great value, as the hilt was studded

studded with precious stones. My curiosity being so far satisfied, I resigned myself to sleep; but to my great surprise, on rising the next morning, I found that my travelling companion was gone; and upon the table in the room where we slept, were written these words—‘ Should you by chance ever see me again, take no notice that we have met before, neither mention the circumstance to any one.’ I confess this rather surprised me, and I inquired of our host if he knew where my late companion was gone? He answered I thought in a prevaricating manner; but his hesitation confirmed me in the suspicion, that he knew him to be somebody of consequence. Now, my friends, all this considered, I think the person I have mentioned could be no other than this Martuccio, and I firmly believe that our host knew it; so little time is passed, that he cannot be far distant from hence, as I make no doubt but that his intention was to proceed to Clagenfurth; therefore if
you

you are alert, by the description I have given you, you may stand a fair chance of obtaining the prize ; for my own part, I would willingly join you in the attempt, but as I am disappointed in seeing my relation, must hasten back to my family ; so," taking up the jug, "*success attend you.*" His sentiment was cordially repeated, and Martuccio, judging this a propitious moment for leaving a company in which, notwithstanding all his effrontery, he felt unusually embarrassed, shook his companions by the hand, and hastily saying, "farewell," immediately departed, leaving the soldiers in some astonishment at the suddenness of his exit.

Their surprise however had no sooner subsided, than the one who had taken a very trivial share in the foregoing conversation started from his seat, exclaiming, "D——n it, Ludovico, what two fools we are! as sure as you are alive, this fellow who has just left us is the very Martuccio himself, that we so much wished to meet

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with ; with what a plausible tale he cajoled us ! Faith I half suspected he was somebody in disguise ; but then he appeared so tranquil and unconcerned, that I could never have supposed him to have been the villain who has ran away with and concealed the Princess Adeline ; had we laid hands on him, we should have made a fortune sufficient to have made the remainder of our lives comfortable.”

“ Then why the devil do we stay loitering here ? ” exclaimed his comrade ; “ he cannot be gone far ; and if we are but lucky enough to take the right road, we shall catch him yet.”

Flushed with the renovated hope of regaining their imaginary loss, their host was instantaneously summoned, and having discharged their reckoning, they hurried away big with the expectation. But Martuccio was a man not easily thrown off his guard. The fallacy of the story which he had so readily invented of himself, though calculated to deceive an ignorant mind for
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the moment, would, he was convinced, soon be discovered, whenever reflection obtained an ascendancy over the first impression. His life hung suspended by a thread ; for if taken, so much had he excited the hatred of the lower rank of people, who gave him credit for most of the tyrannic acts which had sullied the reign of Albert, the sacrifice of it would be summary and instantaneous. His fortitude, however, did not forsake him in this emergency, and upon this occasion he displayed it in an eminent degree.

Upon rushing out of the house where he had left the soldiers, it occurred to him, that although it was possible some time might elapse before their suspicions were roused, yet that, fatigued as he was, he should not be able to proceed to a distance sufficient to ensure his safety from their pursuit, should they make the attempt. He was well acquainted with the neighbourhood, as, being at no great distance from Clagenfurth, he had frequently made ex-

cursions thither, and as his mind was always active, he had made such observations, which at the time was merely the result of habit, but were now likely to prove of the most essential service to him. He had taken particular notice of many cavities, formed apparently by nature, and which his curiosity had prompted him to examine. Many of these were very intricate, and no less curious; they were constructed also in such a manner as to render an entrance almost impossible, if defended by one resolute man. One of these was fortunately within a short distance of the house which he had left, and it happened that he had previously examined it, so that he was well acquainted with the convenience it afforded him in his present hazardous dilemma. It was situated in a direct opposite tract from the common road, a circumstance which he naturally judged would be in his favour, as the soldiers would probably suppose that a man who wished to escape from a pursuit, would make the best of his way
until

until he thought himself out of danger. But this was by no means the intention of Martuccio, who, after having followed the common tract for some time, turned aside, and, sheltered by the immense thickness of the boundary hedges, cautiously crept back and reached the cavern undiscovered, which he entered, almost exhausted by the fatigue which the uncommon exertions he had made occasioned. A cordial with which he always took care to be supplied, as a few drops only were a most powerful restorative, gave considerable relief to his harrassed frame, and as he felt himself in comparative safety, he employed his mind in sketching out his future plans.

To his discernment it is more than probable that Martuccio owed his safety, as the soldiers, when they had recovered their astonishment, made every haste in their power, by following him on that road which they thought it most reasonable he would pursue. Fortunately, although unknown to himself, he had dropped some

trifling part of his dress, just before he left the direct path ; this was recognized by them, and materially served to deceive them into the opinion that they were advancing upon him. They accordingly persevered with greater spirit ; neither did they begin to entertain any suspicion that they might again be deceived, until the approach of night warned them of the inutility of persisting in their adventure any longer. But it was with considerable reluctance that they gave up their golden prospects ; dispirited, therefore, at their defeat, and having no business which obliged them to return to the cottage which they had left, they rested themselves at the first village they saw, cursing their ill fortune, that in the first instance had so blinded their faculties, and had afterwards led them such a fruitless chase.

While Martuccio remained in his temporary concealment, his active mind was not only employed in canvassing his future plans, but also in contemplating the extraordinary

traordinary changes which in so short a space of time had taken place in the fortunes of Albert. It was evident, that with the fall of his chief, all his own high-raised hopes were in one instant levelled to the ground; but although his ambition had received so severe a shock, his desire of possessing the Princess Adeline was increased. He felt no compunction in becoming a traitor to his master; that master was now a fugitive, proscribed, and a reward publicly offered for his head. The outrage which he had committed against the remains of the late Prince of Clagenfurth, had entirely alienated the regard of those chiefs of the empire who, previous to that event, had been his friends and allies. The dereliction of these, joined to the hereditary power of the house of De Mountfort, which was little inferior to that of the Emperor himself, deprived Albert of every asylum in the German dominions; but still the Castle of Mittewald might afford him a temporary if not a permanent retreat, if he could

reach it undiscovered, and there (distracted in the thought) a reward was awaiting him far richer than empire itself, the lovely Adeline. These ideas rapidly crossed the mind of Martuccio, and he instantly determined upon his plan of action. Leaving his concealment, as he thought all danger from his late companions was at an end, he hastily retraced his steps, in the hope of arriving at the Castle before his late chief, who, he made no doubt, would make the same attempt. Anxious to arrive at the destined spot, he allowed himself but little time for rest, and the shades of night frequently beheld the daring traveller undauntedly braving its utmost horrors. His eagerness in some measure defeated itself. Nature could not support the violent exertion, and a friendly cottage gave him shelter, during an illness which threatened existence itself. Fearful that by the delay this had occasioned, Albert would have gained the advantage over him, not even the experience which he had lately received

received was able to check his impetuosity ; and scarcely could he be deemed convalescent when he recommenced his journey. One morning in particular was so uncommonly sultry, as to oblige him to rest during the extreme prevalence of the sun. Feeling a lassitude occasioned by his late illness, he unconsciously fell into a calm undisturbed sleep ; and either fatigue, or the violence of the heat, had such an effect, that he did not awake until its last rays had sunk beneath the western horizon. Surprised and vexed at having lost so much time, when every moment seemed an age, he determined upon pursuing his journey during the night. As soon, therefore, as he deemed himself secure from the observation of any of the peasants returning from their daily labour, or the more hardy hunter, he set forward. The moon rose unclouded, and promised to afford him a welcome assistance ; but so absorbed was he in thought, that the gradual decrease of her brilliancy escaped his observation, until

he became involved in total darkness. A secret horror stole upon the mind of Martuccio, as he contemplated the unexpected change. His ideas became confused, and losing that self-possession which in general he was eminently master of, he attributed to a supernatural power a change which was the sole effect of nature itself. The howling of the wolves in the adjacent forest, through which his road lay, contributed still further to unhinge his mind, and at length so far overpowered his faculties, as to banish all recollection of the tract which led him to the Castle of Mittelwald. In this untoward dilemma he wandered most part of the night, and on the first appearance of day, he found himself in a part of the country with which he was totally unacquainted. This discovery plunged him into fresh difficulties, as, if the information which he had received from the soldiers was correct, and he had additional reasons to conclude that it was, it would be dangerous for him to make any particular

particular inquiries ; but although this circumstance gave him some uneasiness, the additional delay occasioned by his deviation from the right road was of much more consequence to him, as, which was now probable, should Albert arrive at the Castle previous to himself, his intended enterprise would be rendered more difficult, if not entirely futile.

While his thoughts were thus seriously employed in canvassing the manner by which he could with the greatest safety extricate himself from the difficulties in which he was involved, he perceived a female at some distance ; it immediately occurred to him, that no danger would arise from making some inquiries of her, more particularly as her dress denoted her to be of a rank superior to the common peasantry of the country. He accordingly hastened towards her ; but the terrified Alphonsine, for it was the lovely daughter of the Chevalier De Rottenberg whom chance threw in his way, fled, affrightened at his appearance.

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ance. Anxious to be relieved from the disagreeable predicament he lay under, and unaware of the terror he excited, Martuccio, as already related, pursued her. His hasty retreat, however, was not occasioned by the sight of Berthold ; he was totally unknown to him, and he would probably have hazarded an explanation of his motives for following Alphonsine, had not Albert suddenly emerged from the cavern in which he had concealed himself. Although disguised, his commanding form was readily recognized by the administrator to his pleasures ; and to a mind less depraved than that of Martuccio, the recognition would have proved a source of infinite happiness. To pour the balm of comfort into the wounded heart of a friend, is to the man of true virtuous principles the acme of felicity ; but the soul of that specious hypocrite, Martuccio, nurtured in vice, disclaimed all knowledge of friendship, except when his own interests were concerned ; then would the honeyed ac-
cents

cents of flattery flow from his tongue with irresistible eloquence, but so artfully concealed by the most refined subtilty, as to blind the unsuspecting victim of his deceit, and make even his virtues administer food to his ambitious appetite. He was well aware, that had he discovered himself to his disguised chief, his reception would probably have been more affectionate than ever, as the same misfortune bound them in the same chain, and the same interest of concealment operated equally upon both. A half-formed villain might have fell into the snare, and without looking to the future, have eagerly embraced the present opportunity of mutual assistance ; but the ideas of Martuccio, quick in comprehension, embraced more enlarged prospects. With Albert he must still remain the subservient minion ; without him, perhaps at no very distant time, he might become his master ; at all events, should he discover himself, Adeline would probably be lost to him for ever. Such were the ideas that
prompted

prompted the instantaneous retreat of Martuccio, the moment he descried Albert hastening to the assistance of the terrified Alphonsine ; but although he contrived to secrete himself from his view, and successfully eluded the search which was afterwards made for him, yet he cautiously reconnoitred the steps of his late chief, convinced that his intended destination was ultimately similar to his own. He knew that when he came within a certain distance, he could with ease penetrate into the interior of the Castle before Albert could obtain admittance within the gates. He accordingly followed all his motions, until he arrived at the village above mentioned, and the delay which Albert voluntarily occasioned by remaining there, gave him full leisure to execute his projects. We have before observed that Martuccio had formerly belonged to an association of banditti, who had made the deserted part of the Castle of Mittewald their occasional residence, and that the entrance used by
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these depredators was entirely unknown to any but those of the society, and indeed was at so great a distance from the walls of the Castle, as no one, even should it be accidentally discovered, could possibly suspect that it led to the interior of so massy a pile of building. This was well known to Martuccio, and as many years had elapsed since the band had been dispersed, he little doubted but that it was totally forgotten.

The curiosity of Martuccio during his residence at the Castle, while connected with the banditti, had not been solely confined to the northern apartments; frequently in disguise, well calculated to terrify curiosity, if by chance he was observed, he wandered over the whole building, and by dint of perseverance he discovered many secret avenues, and entrances into different apartments, which, from their appearance alone, it was evident had never been made use of during the memory of the present race. Indeed they were so inimitably

inimitably concealed, that nothing but the minutest scrutiny, joined to extraordinary good fortune, could possibly have enabled any one to have penetrated the mystery.

Immediately as Martuccio perceived Albert to have entered the village, he hastened to a secret path in the mountains, which led to the unknown entrance; it was situated in the thickest part of some under-wood, apparently impervious to any living being, but the wild inhabitants of the forest, as even those who were acquainted with it were obliged to crawl upon their hands and knees for some considerable way. From the entrance to the place where it emerged within the Castle, the passage was nearly a mile, the whole formed with the utmost care under ground. He had taken care to provide himself with the materials for striking a light, and other necessities; and so elated was he at the prospect of success, that he in some measure relaxed from his usual caution; this, and his eagerness to anticipate the arrival of Albert at the Castle, and

and to obtain possession of Adeline previous to his entering the gates, occasioned him to overlook many minutia, which would have damped the courage of his enterprise, by pointing out that others had lately trod the dreary path. But this circumstance escaped his observation, and with much less difficulty than he expected, he gained the interior of the northern apartments. He knew that when he last left the Castle, after having consigned his charge to Roberto, the Princess occupied the suite of apartments which joined to the deserted wing. They had been selected for her by her kind friend, as being not only more suited to the rank of the Princess, but likewise more pleasant, as the view from them was the most extensive, as well as the most beautiful of any that could be seen from thence. But so short is human foresight, that frequently the means which are intended to be most conducive to our happiness, prove the source of our misery. Such was the fate—
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which the unfortunate Adeline was soon destined to experience. Martuccio was aware, that to ensure complete success, no time was to be lost. He accordingly, after having traversed the northern apartments, hastened towards the corridor, into which, by one of those secret pieces of mechanism, so frequently made use of in the earlier ages, a door concealed from all observation, opened into the room to which the Princess, after her last interview with Roberto, had retired. As he trod silently along the dreary passage, a distant sound arrested his attention; it seemed as if it was occasioned by the letting down of the drawbridge; for a few moments he paused and listened; again the same sound murmured along the vaulted roof, and convinced him that Albert was on the point of entering the Castle; instant decision was necessary; his happiness, nay his life was at stake, for he doubted not but that the impatience of his chief, equally with his own, would lead him instantly to the presence

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sence of the Princess, where, if the celerity of his motions did not prevent, he might be found, and necessarily fall a just sacrifice to the fury of his injured master. Eagerly he touched the secret spring, the pannel immediately yielded to the compression, and Adeline once more became in the power of the most unprincipled of mankind. A temporary insensibility prevented her from knowing the extent of her misfortune, neither did she recover until some time after she had been placed by Martuccio in the vaulted dungeon. So rapidly had the enterprise been undertaken, that he had formed no fixed plan of action, neither had he considered as to the place where he should convey his matchless prize. The arrival, however, of Albert so speedily, determined him to leave the Castle at once, while his victim remained in the state of insensibility, occasioned by the shock which she had received, and to convey her through the secret passage to the exterior of the walls, when, free from the danger of
immediate

immediate pursuit, he could arrange his present confused ideas, and act as circumstances might point out. To this decision he was principally led by his knowledge of Albert's disposition, who, he was certain, would, in defiance of superstitious terrors, cause every part of the Castle to be most minutely examined, in which case, notwithstanding his superior knowledge of the various places of concealment in that extensive range of buildings, yet chance might betray him; but in the possession of Adeline he deemed all other difficulties trivial, and easy to be overcome; nay, he even entertained the presumptuous hope, that when permitted to explain his motives for the commission of an act apparently of such violence, he should prove himself to have been actuated by a real and sincere regard for her. Such were the primary intentions of Martuccio; but the guardian genius of the Princess had not entirely deserted her, and he felt himself compelled by unforeseen circumstances, to defer his intended

intended departure from the Castle, and to run the risk of a temporary concealment in one of the most retired and secret dungeons.

While the traitor was hastening with his insensible victim through the avenues leading to the outlet, a noise like that of retreating footsteps struck his ear ; suddenly he stopped and listened ; all however was quiet, and he conjectured that his fancy had misled him ; resuming his pace, he had proceeded but a few steps ere the sound again reached him ; and to add to his terror, a flash, as if of a distant light, crossed in the direct line he was going. For a moment he was incapable of action ; in the situation, however, of the Princess, he dared not brave a discovery, as her first return of sensibility would inevitably betray his base designs, and effectually bar every hope of working upon her credulity ; the dungeons, therefore, were his only resource, and thither, as has been observed, he hastily conveyed her.

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In this solitary abode, as it was at the very extremity of the northern wing, he trusted that the Princess would escape the search which Albert, he was convinced, would cause to be made for her. We have seen the reluctance with which he found himself obliged to adopt this measure; it was, however, the only one that presented itself to his imagination on so great an emergency, and he now summoned all his faculties to render it effectual. His first consideration was the restoration of the Princess; and as he had taken the precaution of providing himself with some cordial of a peculiar efficacy, he attempted to pour a few drops of it down her throat; the action revived her, and by degrees she was recovered from the faintness which oppressed her. At first she gazed wildly around her, as if doubting the evidence of her senses, until casting her eyes towards her companion, she, by the glimmering light of the torch with which he was provided, recognized the features of the detested

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tested Martuccio. Upon the recovery of her recollection, she had arisen from the cold stone upon which she had been placed, but sunk again upon it, with a degree of horror in her countenance that fully expressed the sentiments of her heart, upon encountering the visage of her persecutor.

Martuccio, who dreaded the consequences of any serious opposition from her, more particularly when the late extraordinary event, which prevented him from pursuing his original intention, was unaccounted for, had formed a tale, which, from its plausibility and affected candour, he flattered himself would prove successful; throwing himself upon his knees, he deprecated her resentment in the most humble terms, and requested her to suspend those unfavourable thoughts, which he perceived she entertained of him, until she had heard the motives which obliged him to act as he had done, assuring her that it was entirely to secure her safety which had obliged him to take such unwarrantable steps; and that if
terror

terror at his first appearance had not caused a deprivation of sense, he should have explained every circumstance before he dared to have removed her from her own apartment; but that as ruin was approaching with the most rapid strides, he had no alternative. He then proceeded to relate the sudden change in the prosperity of Albert, together with his arrival at the Castle, and of his fixed determination of obliging her to consent to his aspiring wishes, either by entreaty or force, it being the only consolation now left him, which could make amends for the loss of power and dominion. Perceiving that the Princess listened with some attention, he endeavoured to persuade her that remorse for the treacherous part which he had taken against her, had so powerfully operated upon his mind, as to determine him in assisting to procure her an escape from a fate she had so much reason to dread, and to restore her to those who had the power to protect her, and who were employing every means

means that could be suggested in the discovery of the place of her concealment. He then proceeded to inform her, that it had been his intention to have left the Castle immediately, by a way known, he had believed, only to himself, and by which he had entered unmolested, but that some peculiar appearances during their passage through the avenues, had obliged him, for their mutual safety, to postpone his intentions, until he was certain that they alone were the sole inhabitants of the vaulted dungeons. From the search of Albert he assured her he had little to dread; and the moment he had ascertained the obstruction which he had met with, he would convey her in safety far beyond the precincts of the Castle.

During this long and insidious harangue, the mind of Adeline had time to recover its equilibrium; and although she by no means believed his assertions, yet fatally convinced that in her present situation she was totally in his power, prudence whis-

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pered an apparent acquiescence, rather than irritate him by well-merited reproaches for his double perfidy, first to herself, and then to the chief who had loaded him with favours, which, although he was totally undeserving of them, merited a more honourable return. The hint which he gave, that others might inhabit that part of the Castle, far from exciting her terror, renewed those hopes which had almost been annihilated; she however carefully concealed her sentiments; but perceiving that he expected some answer to the excuses which he had just made for his conduct, with a dignified mien, that even among the horrors that surrounded them, struck awe into the heart of the arch hypocrite, she thus addressed him:

“ Having once been deceived by a tale as plausible as the one I have now heard, can Martuccio entertain so mean an opinion of the understanding of the Princess of Clagenfurth, as to believe that she will a second time become his dupe, and readily give credit to a fabrication which the events
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of the moment have forced him to adopt? I well know that at present I am in your power, an acquisition obtained by an act of the deepest infamy. Albert is my enemy; nor are there any means which I can adopt with honour, that I would not cheerfully embrace to escape from his power: but although Albert is *my* enemy, he was the friend, the bosom friend of Martuccio, to whom all his secrets were known, and who had, in the most solemn manner, sworn an unalterable attachment to him; yet this boasted friend deserts him at a moment when a reverse of fortune (at least if I may trust to the information) claims from him a more than common regard; and still not content with deserting him, when pity and compassion should urge a greater attention, he adds to the enormity of his ingratitude, by secretly entering the sole retreat left in which he could conceal himself, and basely depriving him of an object which he esteemed a recompence for all his past misfortunes."

“ Would the Princess,” hastily interrupted Martuccio, “ wish to be restored to the protection of Albert ? ”

Adeline remained for a few moments silent, while Martuccio watched every turn of her varying countenance with the most scrutinizing gaze, as if to penetrate her most secret thoughts. But recovering herself from her hesitation, which the question she looked upon as insidious occasioned, she continued—“ Although Albert has been the destroyer of every tie that rendered life of value, and not content with having committed so cruel an outrage, still pursues me with a passion which must ever appear most odious, yet he would blush at a dishonourable action : to avoid him, to escape from his power, is my sincere wish ; yet to owe that escape to Martuccio, is an evil far superior, in my estimation, to remaining within the walls of the Castle of Mittewald, even though inhabited by Albert himself.”

The brows of Martuccio became contracted

tracted at this open avowal of her detestation ; and his savage countenance indicated the fury which he endeavoured to restrain within his own breast ; the Princess instantly observed the change, and felt sensible that she had departed from the temperate line of conduct which she had prescribed herself to observe ; but she scorned to retreat, and waited with patience the bursting of the storm. But this wily hypocrite had a greater command over his passions, and after a momentary suffusion, his visage assumed its accustomed placidity. Taking advantage of a pause in the conversation, he suddenly seized the hand of the astonished Princess, exclaiming, “ Most adored of women, never, never will Martuccio restore his lovely prize to the fugitive Albert, while existence remains. Know, Madam, that from the first moment I beheld you, I loved with a flame as ardent and as pure as that degraded chieftain—’tis love alone which has made me a traitor.” He was proceeding in a strain of the highest

rhapsody, when Adeline, whose surprise was so great as scarcely to be conscious that he held her hand in his, recovered her self-possession, and with a look of ineffable disdain, while "insolent" trembled on her tongue, she snatched it from him. But Martuccio was not of so temporizing a disposition as to be easily repelled—
—"Why, lovely Adeline," exclaimed he, at the same time attempting to take her hand a second time, which she again withdrew with indignation, "why arm those eyes, formed only to inspire the most ecstatic bliss, with terror? Why shrink from the touch of a man who, would, nay, who does perhaps at this very moment, risk his life to preserve your's; or, what is more precious, your honour? Martuccio, Madam, whatsoever his other vices may be, is no ravisher; he is not an Albert, whose passions, once roused, you have already too fatally experienced, are not to be restrained, even by a motive which frequently curbs the most violent—policy. His declarations
respecting

respecting yourself have always been consistent ; and if his heart recoiled not, when he devoted even religion to destruction ; if, while inexorable to his suit, you had still remained within the consecrated walls of St. Veil, can you suppose that the trifling impediments which obstruct him here, where he reigns supreme, will prevent the accomplishment of his wishes ? No, Madam, believe me, flight is your only resource, and in me you shall find one both willing and able to rescue you from the dangers which are rapidly closing around you. I have long, Madam, regretted the life my untoward fortunes have compelled me to lead ; and although many females have occasionally caught my attention, yet I can safely swear I never truly loved until I beheld the Princess of Clagenfurth ; neither was it her beauty only, though eminently conspicuous, that attracted me ; the serenity of those virtues which frequently made me shrink within myself, while conducting you to this Castle, first impressed upon my mind

the immeasurable distance between conscious virtue and conscious guilt. Complete, therefore, the work of which those virtues have laid the foundation ; deign to smile upon my pretensions, and you will have the merit of restoring to the more valuable part of society, a man too long separated from it by accidents which it was not in his power to prevent. Let not the Princess, however, imagine that she would bestow her regard upon one whose birth would degrade her. Had vanity a share in my composition, the genealogists of Italy could prove a lineal descent from the most noble of its houses, although the immense riches which they once possessed are now no longer in existence. But I will not insult the Princess of Clagenfurth with such trivial arguments, but trust that to herself alone I shall be indebted for the prospect of future success."

Adeline listened to this declaration in silence ; indeed, circumstanced as she was, she knew not how to act. Her mind, edu-
cated

cated in the principles of the sternest virtue, felt an horror at having recourse to hypocrisy, and by giving future hope, to run the risk of deliverance, before any serious attempt against her could be put in practice. But even could she bring herself to act in this manner, was it, she thought, probable that a man skilled in the deepest lore of that detestable vice, would become a dupe to such flimsy art? Without a friend to advise her, or without a flattering prospect of escape either way, she felt her spirits sink, overpowered by mental agony. Martuccio, who had carefully watched every turn of her countenance, saw the transition, and pouring out some of the cordial, which had before proved so efficacious, she drank it without opposition. The good effects of its reviviscent qualities were instantaneous, and the readiness with which she had accepted his assistance gave great pleasure to Martuccio, who, accosting her with more tenderness than he had hitherto assumed (for he really loved her

as sincerely as one of his disposition could be supposed to cherish that passion), he repeated his solemn assurances of treating her with every due respect, if she would consent a second time to trust to his guidance.—“ Alas !” replied Adeline, “ why ask what, in my present situation, I am unable to refuse? I am in your power ; but rest assured, whatever fate may have in store for me, these widowed arms receive no second husband. If Martuccio will call those germs of virtue which were born with him into action, but which have been concealed by a vicious education, and be the happy instrument of restoring the Princess of Clagenfurth to her anxious friends, not only an oblivion of past events shall repay the obligation, but riches, honours, and every glorious prospect that can allure ambition, shall reward my deliverer ; and I trust that the word of any branch belonging to the family of De Mountfort, is a pledge sufficient for the security of the performance of their promise.”

Every

Every word that the Princess uttered was carefully attended to by Martuccio ; he was by no means the dupe of her artifice, but he had the satisfaction of perceiving by the tenor of her discourse, that she would rather confide in him than trust her person in the possession of Albert ; and although the hopes which this discovery raised were but faint, yet still so eager is a lover to believe what he wishes to have realized, that he by no means despaired of ultimate success, especially as he had determined upon that mode of conduct towards her, which he flattered himself would inspire her with greater confidence. His chief object at the present moment was to get clear of the walls, as a discovery, either from Albert, or the supposed intruders, might be equally fatal. He therefore, but in the mildest terms, reurged his former arguments, to induce her to trust herself to his care, assuring her that he would no more offend her by hinting his passion, until time should have softened the just

indignation which she felt for his former duplicity, although he could not avoid looking forward to it as the ultimatum of his happiness and ambition.

The Princess, sensible that she had no alternative of escaping from Albert without the assistance of Martuccio, whereas many unforeseen circumstances might occur to disengage her from the latter, when free from the power of the former, made no reply, but inquired what the measures were which he had purposed adopting to ensure their escape? Martuccio had, in a cursory manner, mentioned the impediment which had detained them; but now that she might in some measure be convinced he wished not to deceive her, he thought it most prudent to explain the whole, as well as the circumstances would admit, together with his suspicions respecting them. He accordingly began by relating the history of the banditti, who, many years prior to that time, had inhabited the deserted apartments, and by these means

had raised the reports which had occasioned the people to avoid that part of the building, deeming it the residence of supernatural agents.

This was a circumstance very desirable to that ferocious band, as they felt assured their retreat would not be molested—"It was my misfortune," continued Martuccio, "to be attacked, when travelling over these mountains, by a detachment of this horde; the servants who were with me, except one, fell in my defence; and this poor wretch, together with myself, received so many wounds, as to render either escape, or any further resistance possible; we were consequently bound, and brought to this Castle, by a well-concealed passage, known only to themselves. Contrary to their usual custom, they dressed our wounds, and paid us such attention as our situation would admit of. Men of all trades and all sciences belonged to their association, so that surgeons, the most necessary of any in such a community, were not wanting. I confess

I was

I was much surprised, after the severe and sanguinary attack which they had made on us, to find myself treated in a manner so attentive ; and I was in hopes, that when I became perfectly convalescent, I should be permitted to pursue my journey, as they had plundered me of all my property, which was a considerable booty. Alas ! my dream of expectation was soon dissolved, and, to my great sorrow, I was made acquainted with the motives which had induced them to act so contrary to their usual custom, by administering relief to my wounded servant and myself.

“ The captain of the banditti had remarked the intrepidity with which we had sustained the attack made upon us, and as our resistance had cost them the lives of several of their bravest men, it was resolved, that as we were young and muscular, we should remain with them, as a supply for those our bravery had deprived them of. No sooner, therefore, had the surgeon who attended us reported our convalescence

convalescence to the captain, than we were ordered to attend a general meeting. The whole of the troop, except the necessary guards, whom they always posted at the outlets to prevent surprise, were present ; and never were beheld a set of countenances more ferocious than those who were collected together upon the occasion. The captain, after having for some time expatiated upon their mode of life, the pleasures they enjoyed, and various other subjects, which it is unnecessary to enumerate, informed us, that the society, impressed with an high idea of our bravery, had unanimously resolved to dispense with their general usage towards prisoners who had resisted, and caused the death of any of their associates, in our favour ; and that instead of revenging their loss by retaliation, they permitted us to enter into the bond of their society. Perceiving that I was on the point of addressing him, he hastily exclaimed, in a tone that enforced obedience, ‘ Be silent until I have explained

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ed the destiny that awaits you.' He then more fully informed me of their general custom towards prisoners who were wounded, as well as those who, through imbecility, or other causes, were unable to perform such duties as was required of them; concluding in an accent most impressive, 'Remember that our word is fate, and that our decision is as inviolable as the boasted laws of the Medes and Persians; nor can it, when once given, so strongly are we bound by an oath taken in the most solemn manner that can be devised, ever be broken in favour of any individual. Two things alone are offered to your choice, either to become members of the society, who have honoured you by their adoption, or suffer instant death—one word, 'yes,' or 'no,' is all that is allowed you, and determines your fate.'

"Before I could scarcely collect my thoughts, I perceived the carbines of the whole band pointed at myself and my unfortunate servant, who was placed at some distance

distance from me, ready to execute the general decree. What could I do? death stared me in the face, and I felt assured that they would inflict it, as menaced. Alas! I had too soon a dreadful certainty that my presentiment did not deceive me. Scarcely had the fatal *yes* escaped my lips, before the sound of carbines echoed through the vaulted apartment, and, looking round, I perceived my faithful servant drop, pierced by a number of balls. Whether the dread of being immured alive occasioned his hasty fate, I know not; for, as we had frequently communications together during our illness, concerning the measures we should pursue, he had ever betrayed the greatest dread of being forced to remain there; but whatever his motives were, I felt that my compliance had saved my life; and the captain, by a most expressive look, seemed to tell me, that the scene I had witnessed was an ample proof that his threats were not merely intended to intimidate. Not the least notice, however, was
taken

taken of this execution, or any comments made upon it ; the body was immediately removed, and I was summoned to take the usual oaths. The sanguinary scene of which I had so lately been the witness, had made me quite an automaton in their hands ; I dared not make any comments upon the past, and dreaded equally to inquire concerning the future. I will not, however, shock the ears of delicacy and sensibility, by a description of what passed at the ceremony of my initiation, which, though of a nature most horrid, was at the same time so impressive upon the mind of the initiated, as to force it to a strict observance of the engagement entered into.

“ Several years passed away without a possibility of my escaping, particularly as I in time became of so much consequence, as to arrive at the rank of second in command. In this capacity I had more frequent opportunities of examining almost the whole of the Castle, and found it contained secrets of a most wonderful nature ;

for

for though artfully concealed, there is not a room in the whole extent of the building, whether the inhabited part or not, which does not communicate by secret avenues one with another; many of these were well known to the whole society, but the knowledge of the principal ones, particularly such as join the northern apartments to the others, are, I believe, confined to my own breast; certain, indeed, am I, that none of my former associates were acquainted with them.

“ A severe engagement which took place between us and a superior force, at length so ruined our society, that the few who escaped with their lives, which, except myself, were only three, were obliged to fly the country for ever. To me it was a most welcome deliverance, although, on my return to my native country, I found my family dispersed, and my fortune, it being supposed that I had paid the debt of nature, delivered over, as was the custom after a certain period, to the next heir. Convinced,

vinced, however, of my identity, he generously offered to restore it, which I refused, at least until marriage rendered a home necessary for it. Notwithstanding my forbearance, he forced me to accept a sum sufficient for the prosecution of those views which I entertained; and contrary to the wishes of those few friends I had found in existence, I once more left my native country, intending to spend my future days in the service of some foreign prince. Chance led me to Clagenfurth; it is therefore unnecessary for me to repeat the transactions in which I have since been engaged.

“It was by the means which I have related, that I became acquainted with the secret outlet that leads from the Castle into the country, by which it was my intention to have escaped in the first instance. But it is now necessary that I should explore the different passages, in order to observe whether we can leave our present asylum with security.”

“Have

“Have you any idea,” asked Adeline, “who the intruders can be?”

“Not any, Madam,” replied Martuccio, “that I can ground a direct opinion upon ; yet I confess that it has occurred to me, that it is one of the banditti who escaped with me, as I have mentioned before, and who I know was living a few weeks since ; but what his motives can be for returning hither, I have no idea. If I am right in my conjecture, it must be Sebastian, the brother of Bernardo, whose cottage afforded us a temporary shelter, when I unfortunately conducted you to this Castle. You may possibly recall to your remembrance the anxiety I was under during the latter part of our remaining there, and how anxious I was to get at a sufficient distance from the inhabitants of it, as I suspected that both Bernardo and Sebastian belonged to a similar society ; and from the earnestness with which I sometimes observed them looking at me, I was almost certain that he recognized my features ; and most happy
was

was I when I found myself out of danger from any attempt which they might make against your liberty or my own. Such, Madam, are my suspicions, and I flatter myself that the candid manner in which I have disclosed my former life, will induce you to place a confidence in my assertions, that I will protect you with it."

The Princess found her mind relieved from its anxiety in some degree by this explanation. She had remarked the conduct of Sebastian when at the cottage, and although she could not define her opinion of him, still she had been almost tempted to have claimed his protection; and notwithstanding the suspicions of Martuccio that he belonged to the banditti, she felt herself almost irresistibly impelled, if the intruder proved to be Sebastian, to solicit his protection, although this, she was convinced, was a hazardous resource: at length she resolved to be guided by events.

To the proposal of Martuccio, of leaving
her

her while he examined the different passages, she made many forcible objections, and at length so powerfully urged it, that he could no longer refuse her accompanying him; yet he consented only upon the condition that she observed a total silence. To this injunction, strange as it appeared to her, she promised obedience, perceiving that by a refusal she should not be permitted to leave the horrid dungeon she was then immured in, where, perhaps, should Martuccio desert her, in order to make his own escape from any sudden danger, she might remain unnoticed by any one, and be left to perish by hunger.

In order to avoid a premature discovery of themselves, Martuccio concealed the light he provided himself with, as much as possible, beneath his vest; and thus prepared, they left their gloomy retreat, and turned into the passage, which the Princess was informed would ultimately conduct her to liberty. They proceeded for some time without molestation, or observing

ing any thing that indicated an appearance of interruption; and her conductor whispered, that he trusted the greatest danger was over, as they were past the spot where he had been first alarmed. Scarcely, however, had the Princess received this comfortable assurance, than she felt herself pulled closer to him, as if to screen her from observation; and she was on the point of breaking the enjoined silence, when she perceived two men at the corner of one of the avenues, apparently watching their motions. The strangers whom she had so long ago observed in the northern apartments, immediately rose to her recollection; and from the view she had of them, she was confident that they did not belong to that association which Martuccio dreaded to meet. Her mind once more became agitated and distracted in what manner to act; whether boldly to throw herself upon their mercy, should they make their appearance, or trust to the plausible assurances of her conductor.

Martuccio perceived her agitation, but
attributed

attributed it to a far different cause from the real one ; he therefore, in a low voice, repeated his expressions of protection, and urged her to hasten forward with all the expedition possible. Scarcely had he expressed his wish, than a noise at a distant part of the Castle announced the arrival of Albert, and that the escape of the Princess being discovered, the search was commenced. This served as a sufficient incitement to them to encrease their speed, which would most probably have been successful, had not the two men, whom he had before fancied to have seen, attacked him with a rapidity that scarcely permitted him to assume a posture of defence. Martuccio was not destitute either of skill or courage, and for some time he kept possession of the arm of Adeline, and with the utmost dexterity, warded off the blows which were levelled at him. He was at length compelled to loose her from him ; the engagement then became more furious ; and while they were in the midst of it, the noise from

the other part of the Castle was much louder, and was evidently approaching nearer to them. This sound seemed to have a similar effect upon all the combatants, as each became more eager to terminate the contest, which was prolonged by Martuccio with incredible obstinacy against two such powerful opponents. But while they were thus intent upon their own actions, the Princess, more alarmed at the rapid approach of Albert, than for the issue of the contest, rushed rapidly along the avenue, unperceived both by Martuccio and the strangers, who were too intent upon their own actions to observe her absence. Fortune, however, at length decided in favour of the unknown, and Martuccio sunk, covered with wounds, to the ground. It was then that the absence of the Princess was first perceived by one of those who had attacked her conductor; his exclamation recalled the wandering senses of Martuccio, who, with a look that fully spoke the interest he felt, requested them to leave him
to

to his fate, and endeavour to save the Princess of Clagenfurth from Albert, who was at that instant seeking her over the Castle.

“How,” said the eldest of the strangers, whom by his voice Martuccio recognized to be Sebastian, “canst thou who betrayed the unhappy victim into the hands of the tyrant now presume to wish for her deliverance from a fate incurred by thy villainy?”—“Alas!” said the fainting wretch, “it is too true, Sebastian, that I betrayed the Princess; yet if you now find her, she will assure you of my faith in this respect, that I was upon the point of conveying her from the tyrant through the secret outlet, when you so unfortunately encountered me; but there is no time to enter into an explanation of my change of conduct; hasten after the Princess, and may you be fortunate in your search, as the approach of Albert brings destruction indiscriminately upon all: as to myself, though severely wounded, I feel myself able to crawl through the secret labyrinth to the adja-

cent monastery, where assistance can be procured."

Sebastian, although aware of the character of Martuccio, felt that in this instance he could not have any material object in deceiving them, and he now deprecated their hasty vengeance. Repentance, however, was unavailing, and the only measure which they had to pursue, was following the advice of their late antagonist. It would have been an object to them to have secured the person of Martuccio ; but the necessity of pursuing Adeline with all expedition, and also of avoiding the search of Albert, which they had as much reason to dread as the Princess, compelled them, however reluctant, and contrary to the orders which they had received, to leave him to his fate.

Impelled by terror, Adeline rushed through the vaulted passages, directed solely by a small glimmering light, which occasionally issued from the apertures above. Chance was her only guide ; and frequently
was

was, she obliged to pause, in order to recover her breath, almost exhausted by the velocity of her motions. Yet her rest was but of short duration ; the sounds that at intervals echoed through the building, and which her terrified fancy painted nearer than they were, forced her to resume her flight.

Yet although fear had taken strong possession of her mind, it had not entirely eradicated that reliance upon Providence, which had always, even in the most imminent dangers, enabled her to bear up against the evils attendant on despondency. Her resignation received its merited reward, as, at the moment when the hope of extricating herself from the dreadful situation in which she was involved was almost extinct, she found her spirits revived, by the discovery that the air seemed more pure than that which she experienced when she first escaped from Martuccio and his opponents. This led her to imagine that the outlet which the former had alluded to was at no

great distance, and that she had fortunately taken the right direction. The idea that an escape from all her enemies might possibly be accomplished, gave an additional energy to her exertions, lassitude gave way to resolution, and she determined to persevere, by keeping, if possible, in the same direction. As she advanced her hopes became more sanguine ; the air became gradually fresher, until at length a small opening was perceptible, at no great distance from the spot to which she had, with so much difficulty, penetrated. The joy of this discovery operated so powerfully upon her spirits, that she felt herself once more compelled to stop. A stone, which projected from the interior of the rock, afforded a seat, which, although rugged and uneven, was far from being unacceptable ; here she felt herself in some degree of safety, as no noise from the interior alarmed her, or indicated a suspicion that she was pursued. But the want of sustenance began to be severely felt ; the cordial
which

which she had taken when in the dungeon, had hitherto supported her; but she reflected, even should she succeed in her escape, of which there was now but little doubt, that the uncertainty of obtaining relief was great. Perfectly ignorant of the country to which the outlet might lead, she dreaded lest the night might approach, before the cottage of some kind peasant afforded her the necessary accommodation; urged by this powerful consideration, she once more left her temporary place of rest, and though **her** wearied limbs could scarce perform **their** natural functions, proceeded towards the **spot** which hope pointed out as the passage to freedom.

The nearer she approached the more was she assured of success; this encouraged perseverance; and at length, though with the utmost difficulty, she succeeded in forcing her way through the intricate labyrinth, composed of thorns and briers, which had so long concealed the secret entrance to the Castle from all the neighbourhood.

Scarcely could the Princess believe the evidence of her senses, when she found herself so unexpectedly freed from all her persecutors; but although her joy was excessive, it did not prevent her from exerting that prudence she so eminently possessed. Her situation was still very precarious, as it was most probable, that should one of the strangers who attacked Martuccio prove to be Sebastian, as suspected by him, he would make use of his knowledge of the secret passage, in order to escape the search already commenced by Albert; for it was most reasonable to suppose that he was in equal, if not superior danger to herself, should he be discovered in the interior of the Castle. This consideration urged her to penetrate further into the country, notwithstanding a secret monitor almost enforced a belief, that a meeting with the opponents of Martuccio would not be prejudicial to her interest. But the terror of putting herself voluntarily into the power of a man who was now well known

known to have formerly belonged to that terrific society, even if he was not a member of a similar one at the present instant, outweighed the rising thought, and stimulated her to proceed forward. A few berries, which fortunately grew near the entrance of the cavern, alleviated the immediate calls of hunger, while a pearly stream that trickled down an adjacent rock, assuaged her thirst, and enabled her to execute her design.

During the residence of the Princess in the Castle, the conversation had frequently turned upon the romantic beauties of the surrounding country ; and from the apartment which had been allotted to her, the view over it was very extensive. While Adeline was amusing the eye by the contemplation of the varied scene, often would Madalen and Agnes point out to her particular places, describing their situation as well as their limited knowledge would admit ; but what they failed in was most amply supplied by the noble-minded Roberto,

berto, who, perceiving the Princess received great pleasure in being made acquainted with the geography of the neighbourhood, gave her every requisite information, and so clearly described the different positions, that the Princess little doubted her ability of recognizing them, should she, at any future period, have an opportunity of examining them. A monastery, about two miles from the Castle, was a prominent feature in the landscape; its towering spires rose conspicuous from the centre of a grove, which, by the majestic grandeur of its trees, seemed coeval with time itself. Adeline recollected that the assistance of a monk had been requested, at the time when she was attacked by the illness which threatened to terminate her existence; and although at the time when he pronounced that his further attendance was unnecessary, her mind was scarcely restored to that temperature which constituted a perfect remembrance of events, still her memory had supplied her with sufficient traits of his philanthropic

philanthropic disposition, as flattered her not only with meeting with a cordial reception from him, but also future protection, could she reach the monastery, in which, from its propinquity to the Castle, she naturally concluded that he was a resident.

Upon her reaching the summit of a hill, which, with much labour, she effected, her heart was dilated by perceiving the wished for haven at no great distance ; pleased at the discovery, she surveyed the scene around. It appeared familiar to her eyes, and observing it with more minute attention, she perceived it to be the same which she had so often viewed with pleasure, blended with admiration, from the parapets of the Castle, and in which a cottage had been mentioned by Roberto, as being much superior to those in general use. Satisfied that she was not mistaken, a new idea occurred to her imagination, which originated from the recollection of the conversation that had passed between herself and Roberto, while he

was giving her a description of the different situations in the environs of the Castle. After descanting upon the general mode of life adopted by the peasantry, the scantiness of their accommodations, and the miserable appearance of its inhabitants, together with the huts in which they resided, he pointed out to her observation one the direct opposite to those in common use. A short history, which Roberto related while directing her attention to the spot, had interested the Princess so much, as to make an indelible impression on her memory, although she little suspected that she might, upon some future day, be an eye-witness of those engaging qualities which its present possessor was so forcibly described to her to be master of.

The occasion which gave rise to this superiority over the rest of the neighbourhood, was thus related by Roberto :

“ The principal part of this extensive territory which we are overlooking, belongs to the chieftain of this Castle, who
assumes

assumes a power equal to royalty itself, over the whole district, but more especially over those domains more immediately in his possession. The only counterbalance to this prerogative, is the pretension of the monks belonging to the monastery, who not only deny the power of the chief over those lands which they themselves hold, but they have frequently even dared to question its legality in many other points. Frequent have been the contests, and much blood has been spilt upon both sides, until at last, both parties, wearied out, agreed upon a compromise. The possession of the cottage I have mentioned, with the lands belonging to it, which form no inconsiderable property, was, from some peculiar circumstances, equally desirable to both parties, and the negociation was on the point of being broke off, when it was agreed that the decision should be left to the Emperor. Accordingly each party sent their confidential emissaries to Vienna; and so nearly balanced were their claims, that

that to avoid partiality, and as it had originally been a royal fief, granted from the crown, that just monarch proposed giving an equivalent to both, and that the premises in question should again revert to the imperial sway. This was readily acceded to, as the exchange offered was more than adequate to the relinquishment. It appeared to many people at the time rather extraordinary, that so trifling a subject should engage the imperial attention; but both the superior of the monastery, and the chief of the Castle, soon repented of the error which they had committed, by suffering so powerful a neighbour to be a spy upon their actions. These mountainous districts had frequently disturbed the adjoining states, by falling upon them unexpectedly, and when they were least prepared for resistance, in which they were generally secretly abetted, if not openly assisted, by the chief of Mittewald, and the disaffected monks, who always received a proportionate share of the spoil obtained
by

by so unjust a warfare. Far removed from the imperial residence, the act was committed before it could possibly be prevented. In order to prevent this as much as possible, no sooner had the Emperor obtained possession of his new grant, than he erected a neat, but small cottage, and endowed it with the most extensive privileges, exempting it from all jurisdiction, but that of the Emperor himself in council, and ordained that it should be the residence only of a person who had shewn himself superior to seduction from his allegiance, and whose principles could not be shaken by poverty or riches. It is needless to enumerate those who have since occupied it; but the present inhabitant is a character so universally beloved and respected, that he may truly be said to have regenerated the whole country, and to have united friends with foes. Frequently have I been tempted to have introduced him to the Castle, but the peremptory orders which

which I received from Albert, have always deterred me."

Such was the concise history of a man now recollected by Adeline as inhabiting a cottage, which she conjectured was at no great distance. She accordingly changed her first design, and determined to trust to the benevolence of a virtuous individual, rather than place her confidence in a set of men who, although they formed a religious society, might, either from policy or interest, be tempted to betray her into the power of Albert.

In order to accomplish her purpose, she took a more minute survey of the country round her, and fortunately calling to mind that the cottage which she was in quest of was situated to the right of the monastery, she bent her steps in that direction, and soon discovered that she was much nearer to it than she had imagined. Her joy at beholding the wished-for haven felt some alloy, as she reflected upon the strangeness

strangeness of her appearance unaccompanied ; yet when she recollected the character given by Roberto of her intended host, she could scarcely doubt of experiencing an hospitable reception.

When she arrived at a small distance from this terrestrial paradise, for such it appeared, she discovered a person, whom she conjectured was the owner of it, seated at a door, the arch of which was concealed beneath the fragrant boughs of the jessamine and woodbine, whose odoriferous perfumes scented the air around them. His person was tall and majestic, and his countenance so amiably expressive, that a novice in the principles of Lavater would have little difficulty in ascertaining the disposition. It was evident, at the first view, to the Princess, that he was of a rank much superior to that which he now assumed ; this discovery gave her encouragement, and she advanced with greater confidence. Her approach was unperceived, as he was busily employed in arranging the branches, which
sprouted

sprouted forth in wild luxuriance from the parent stock. The slight noise that the Princess made in opening the gate that led to the interior of the domain, occasioned him to look round. Surprise and astonishment at the first moment withheld his steps ; but perceiving a beautiful and elegant woman, whose agitation could scarce enable her to support herself, he immediately hastened to offer his assistance. The interposition was most opportune, as the variety of sensations which at the same instant crowded upon the mind of the Princess, was almost too powerful for nature to sustain ; for although her senses remained perfect, still every faculty was so absorbed, that speech was denied her. The look, however, which met his inquiring eyes, spoke volumes to a heart ever open to a tale of distress ; and in a voice whose gentle accent was well calculated to sooth the pangs of sorrow, he assured the Princess of every assistance in his power to bestow ; and at the same time desiring her to suspend

suspend all acknowledgements, neither to enter upon the occasion of her present distress, until she was recovered of the fatigue it was so evident she had experienced, he supported her trembling frame towards the cottage. Before they could reach the entrance, a most beautiful girl ran towards them, and with affectionate zeal requested to assist the lovely stranger, offering some drops which she had brought with her. Adeline, whose heart had been greatly relieved from the oppression that burthened it, by the voice of kindness, received the attention of **the** amiable girl with that elegance which **no** misfortunes could disguise. She had been surprised at the first appearance of her benevolent host, but this surprise was heightened into astonishment, when she beheld the lovely female who had so considerately brought her assistance, and whom she supposed was the daughter of her new friend. Feeling herself much refreshed by the cordial which she had taken, she would willingly have repeated

repeated her acknowledgements for the reception which she had met with, and would have entered into a relation of the motives that forced her to adopt those measures which had thus thrown her upon the benevolence of a stranger ; but he again so earnestly insisted that no retrospect of misfortunes should be alluded to, until rest had sufficiently recruited her wearied spirits, that she was obliged, out of politeness, to acquiesce—" Madam," said the generous Ardolph, " the unfortunate have ever a claim upon my protection and assistance ; neither can I pause to inquire, whether they are occasioned by their own imprudence, or by the villainy of others ; yet permit me to say, that in the present instance I feel something more than common compassion. But I am militating against my own decree," said Ardolph, with a smile ; " no retrospect to-day ; to-morrow, if I am deemed worthy of that confidence, I shall be happy to hear the severe calamity, for severe I am confident
it

it must be, that could force you into the protection of strangers : at present Constantia will accompany you to a chamber, where I trust you will enjoy that repose which is the constant attendant upon virtue. Here, in this cottage, small as it appears, you are safe, whatever may be the dangers by which you are surrounded ; this is an asylum which not even the most daring attempt to violate."

For these kind assurances, the Princess repeated her acknowledgements ; and having received the benediction of her benevolent host, she accompanied the interesting Constantia to the apartment which had been prepared by her assiduous care, who, having seen that every thing was properly arranged, after repeating the compliments of the night, rejoined Ardolph ; and Adeline, fatigued by the exertions both of mind and body, which for many hours past she had undergone, soon sunk into a calm repose.

When Constantia had returned to the
apartment

apartment in which they had been sitting, she perceived that Ardolph was wrapt in deep meditation ; her entrance, however, aroused him from his reverie, and he inquired if his elegant guest seemed disposed to rest ; and on receiving an answer favourable to his wishes, it seemed to give him peculiar satisfaction.—“ My dear girl,” said he, addressing Constantia in the language of the tenderest affection, “ I am well satisfied that it is needless for me to use any argument to induce you to assist the unfortunate, as I have always found you, as to-day, not only ready to comply with, but frequently to anticipate my wishes ; yet there is something so extremely prepossessing in our present inmate, that prompts me to be more active in my services than I have in general deemed necessary. The extraordinary circumstance of her appearance, travelling through a wild and intricate country, without a male, or even female attendant, might to many, who act only from cautious motives, prove
a source

a source of suspicion ; to me it is the reverse, and serves to convince me, that the motives must be more urgent than common, that could induce a female of so elegant a form, to lose sight of the delicacy of her sex, even for a moment. I confess, my conjectures are rather at variance with each other. It is evident from her attire, that she has moved in the superior circles of life ; and, from its being so little soiled, the distance from which she has come cannot be very great. Had banditti inhabited this neighbourhood, I should have thought it might have been some person who had escaped from their power ; but as that has not been the case for many years, I can fix only upon the long deserted Castle of Mittewald, as the place of her abode ; if so, her agitation shews that she was detained there against her will, and it therefore behoves us to be upon our guard, should any inquiries be made.

“ Various strange reports have lately been circulated around the neighbourhood,

hood, which at the time I paid little attention to ; but the present circumstance makes me believe, that there is more truth in them than I suspected ; to-morrow, however, our doubts will be at an end. But I am convinced, whoever our inmate proves to be, that she will be found truly worthy of our assistance and protection. My only reason for having prematurely entered upon the subject, is, that you might not be taken by surprise, should the asylum which she has so fortunately reached be traced, ere the promised discovery takes place. I am thinking," continued Ardolph, " that it will not be improper to order some of the servants to watch round the premises during the present night ; for although we are too well guarded to fear any attack, yet it has ever been my maxim to prefer prevention, rather than trust to the chance of action. Go, therefore, Constantia, and summon our attendants ; they shall draw lots for this service ; for so confident am I of the affection that each individual

Individual entertains both for you and myself, that I am unwilling to hurt the feelings of any, by selecting one for a duty which may be attended with unexpected consequences, in preference to the other."

Constantia, to whom the will of Ardolph was a law, and who had been accustomed to experience that his decisions were founded in wisdom, notwithstanding she felt some surprise at such unusual precautions, which she concluded originated in the reports he had alluded to, hastened to comply with his wishes. A short period was sufficient to assemble men who were constantly attentive to their respective duties; and Ardolph soon found himself surrounded by his faithful menials. Satisfied that he had no occasion to excite their zeal in the performance of any duty that demanded their exertions, he briefly expressed his wishes, without disclosing the real cause of this sudden alarm; and, as he expected, found the whole number eager and anxious to be employed; but as this was not neces-

sary, after passing due encomiums upon their attachment and fidelity, he kindly acquainted them with the reasons that induced him to draw lots. Flattered by the praises of their beloved master, this mode was willingly adopted; and those whom fortune favoured, after having received the instructions necessary for regulating their conduct, immediately repaired to the different places allotted them; while the remainder, whom chance disappointed, declared their resolution of watching, during the night, in the apartment allotted to the servants, armed, in order to assist, should the case be more urgent than was supposed. Ardolph, although he deemed it totally unnecessary, would not oppose their generous wishes; all therefore retired contented, while their master and Constantia felt the purest pleasure in the idea, that they owed the affection which they experienced from their menials, to their having treated them as men, not as slaves.

Every thing being arranged to their satisfaction,

tisfaction, the inhabitants of the cottage retired to rest. The night was calm and serene; not a breath of air caused the slightest motion in the leaves, nor did a sound break the solemn stillness, save when, at intervals, a low lengthened howl bespoke the savage inhabitant of the forest, prowling for his prey. A few stars afforded a partial light to the darkened atmosphere, but so faint, as served rather to deceive than assist the sight. The domains around the cottage were compact, but not extensive, and were enclosed by a hedge, so strong and connected together, as, except at the different entrances, to be impervious to man or beast. At those the trusty menials took their stations, and their arrangements were made in a manner so judicious, as to enable them to give immediate notice to each other; at the same time the necessary signals could be made, so as not to create an unnecessary alarm, or disturb the repose of the family, upon any trifling occurrence.

Tranquil were the first hours of the night; and the faithful watch trusted that the approach of day, which, by the station of the stars, they judged was at no great distance, would dispel all fears of intrusion; but a low rustling noise, which, as they trod their stationed round, caught the ear of two of the guards, dispelled this hope. The intelligence was quickly conveyed to their comrades, and each party remained in silent expectation at their different stations. As the sound advanced, it seemed to approach the gate by which the Princess had entered, and the major part of the guard followed it with the utmost caution and silence, leaving one of their comrades at each of the other entrances, lest any of the intruders should make an attempt there, while they were employed in a different quarter. At length, voices were heard, as if in earnest conversation, though at too great a distance for the words to be distinguished; but, as well as they could ascertain, the party, whoever they were, consisted

sisted but of two persons. From these there could be no dread of any violence, as their force was far too powerful to fear a much greater number; unwilling, however, to be too precipitate, they continued to listen in silence, hoping, as they came nearer, to catch some words, by which they might discover the motives of their approach to the cottage, at so unusual an hour. At length they distinctly heard one, who, by his address, seemed to be the attendant upon the other, say—"Why, my dearest master, would you attempt the dangers and difficulties of these mountains without a guide? dark as the night is, it will be impossible to find any place of shelter, nor would it be prudent to attempt it, as we might possibly be mistaken for banditti." The reply was given in so low a voice, as not to be distinguished; but the little which they had heard, convinced them that these could not be the persons against whom their master had taken these precautions; and as the humanity of Ar-

dolph reigned within the bosoms of his servants, they consulted whether they should not offer shelter to the benighted travellers; they were satisfied that there could be no danger, especially as their fellow-servants kept watch in the hall, and they were convinced that their conduct would meet with the approbation of their master. Having the means with them of striking a light, they had immediate recourse to it, and approaching near the gate, it was instantly perceived by the travellers, who, although pleased with such a fortunate circumstance, approached towards it with great caution, fearing it might be a lure to entice them into danger; but the servants of Ardolph, who, from their situation, had a distinct view of them, perceiving their hesitation, which they attributed to the right cause, soon dispelled their apprehensions, by addressing them in a manner of friendly kindness. Before, however, they admitted the two wanderers within the gates, they informed them that the only accommodation

accommodation they could offer was the servants' hall, where their comrades were assembled upon the same occasion that had obliged them to keep so strict a watch. To this suggestion, the one whose appearance bespoke a superior rank, replied—“Your attention to your duty claims the approbation of one who, as a soldier, must ever approve of fidelity to their trust, even though it may militate against his own ease; but in the present instance, shelter until the morning is all I request; as for repose, a soldier knows no want of it; and should the intrusion your watchful care seems to suspect be attempted, my sword shall repay the obligation conferred upon me.”

Struck with the noble and commanding address of the stranger, they no longer hesitated to admit him and his attendant; and while some of the party conducted them to the hall, the remainder resumed their posts, at which they were rejoined by those who accompanied the travellers, as soon as they had explained the motives for their admis-

sion to their comrades who were assembled there. The night, however, passed away without any farther alarm; and ere the first rays of the sun had illuminated the tops of the distant mountains, the watchful menials had resumed their usual employments, well pleased that, whatever had been the inducement of their master for adopting the late measures, nothing had happened to disturb his tranquillity.

The strangers who had been so unexpectedly introduced, experienced every attention from those to whose care they had been consigned, as was in their power to bestow. Refreshment of various kinds was offered, and gratefully accepted; and as, in consequence of the watch, several beds were vacant, they were entreated to make use of them, if they could excuse their homeliness; but, as they could not disturb their master, who had been considerably agitated during the preceding day, they were the best they could offer. The stranger regarded the menials with surprise
mixed

mixed with pleasure, and could not help reflecting, that if the servants possessed this philanthropy, the master who could infuse such ideas into their minds must be truly amiable; he, however, refused their kind offers, alledging that it was his pledge to their comrades who had so generously admitted him, to partake of every danger with which they were threatened.

Ardolph, whose custom it was to rise with the sun, no sooner entered his usual apartment, than the senior domestic waited upon him with the detail of the transactions that had taken place during the night; the admission of the strangers was, of course, a prominent feature in the narrative, and the praises which their master bestowed upon those who, in the midst of suspicion, dared to exercise the duties of humanity, were more grateful to his servants than the most profuse rewards. No sooner, however, was he made acquainted with the circumstance, than he immediately sent to request the company of the stranger, which was readily

complied with. Upon his entrance, Ardolph rose and saluted him, which was returned, in a manner so elegant and unaffected, as entirely gained the good opinion of his host, who apologized for the remissness of his servants in not providing a bed for him. From this censure they were exculpated by the stranger, who gave a minute account of his kind reception, and his reasons for declining their offers; neither did he omit passing due encomiums upon the strict observance of their duty. Mutually pleased with each other, the time passed away, until the approach of light footsteps reminded Ardolph, that the female who had sought his protection might have reason to avoid being seen by his present guest; he therefore apologized for leaving him a few minutes, and hastened to prevent her sudden entrance. It was not, however, Adeline whom he had heard approaching, but Constantia, to whom he related the circumstances which had taken place during the night, and desired her to acquaint his *protégée*

tegée with the unexpected occurrence. Adeline trembled at the relation; and she doubted not but that her flight was discovered, and that the persons now, at the cottage were those whom she had left in the vaults of the Castle, engaged in combat with Martuccio. Ignorant whether they were friends or foes, she so earnestly desired Constantia to conceal her arrival there, if possible, that the amiable girl deeply sympathized with her anxiety, and, in order to quiet her apprehensions, she readily promised the requested concealment; and acquainted her, that it was by the advice of Ardolph that she had intruded herself so early uncalled, to prevent her joining the family, until their new guests were departed, or their intentions ascertained. This attention of her benevolent host relieved the terrors of the Princess, and with a smile that indicated the satisfaction which she had received, she entreated her lovely communicant not to delay, upon her account, those duties

which she had been accustomed to attend to.

Mutual compliments having passed between Ardolph and the stranger, the latter indicated his intention of pursuing his journey. His host wished him to remain until he had taken some refreshment, which, after much entreaty, he complied with. Constantia was immediately summoned; but, notwithstanding the attentions of beauty, and the kind behaviour of Ardolph, who endeavoured to amuse his guest, the thoughts of the latter were abstracted, and his impatience to depart was visible. The restlessness of his thoughts did not escape the penetration of his host, who, addressing him in a manner that indicated both the goodness and sincerity of his heart, said—"It would be cruel in me to detain you longer than suits your convenience; your countenance declares that the pursuit you are engaged in, whatever the nature of it may be, occupies your whole attention. Curiosity is a vice I never was guilty of, yet

yet I cannot refrain from saying, that should you deem my power or assistance of any service to you, you may command a man who never offered what he did not sincerely wish might be accepted." Constantia conceiving that her presence might prevent the chevalier from answering this advance to confidence as he might otherwise be inclined to do, arose and left the room. For a few moments the stranger remained silent, until at length, addressing his host, in a manner that declared the tumultuous throbbings of his heart, he replied—

"Revenge is my pursuit; for this I have penetrated the intricate recesses of these mountains, heedless of the dangers that oppose me; nor shall my exertions cease until my purpose is effected. A power, superior to man, has declared me, in ambiguous terms, the avenger of a family whose peace has been destroyed by a tyrant; already has my arm compelled him to seek his safety by flight; and, by the means of secret intelligence, I am informed that the
object

object of my vengeance has taken refuge in the Castle of Mittewald ; thither was I hastening, when darkness overtook me, and I deviated from the beaten tract, when, but for the benevolence of your servants, I must have passed the night unhoused, exposed to all its perils."

Ardolph heard him with some surprise ; he was ignorant that Albert was returned to his long-deserted domains, and could not form the most distant idea who else could have so complete a knowledge of a place so little known, as to choose it for a retreat from danger. It immediately, however, occurred to him, that the lady to whom he had promised his protection was, in some degree, interested in the business ; and he now wished that he had heard the outlines of her history the preceding evening, as he could then have been a judge whether it might not be prudent to mention the circumstance to the young chevalier. But, ignorant as he was, he determined to be totally silent upon the subject, as he thought
better

better to trust to time for an elucidation, rather than hasten a *denouement*, which might accidentally prove of the greatest injury to one whom he had solemnly taken under his protection. To the information given by the chevalier, he replied by observing, that from the nobility of soul which shone so conspicuous in his countenance, he was convinced that he pursued his purposed vengeance from no trivial motives; could he, therefore, point out any method by which he might be of service, he should most readily afford it.

A grateful acknowledgment followed this declaration, and the stranger exclaimed with emotion—"Sir, you judge aright; from my hands the wrongs of a whole family demand redress; from me——But I forget myself; a solemn oath binds me never to divulge those wrongs, until vengeance, ample vengeance, has expiated them. For your proffered assistance, receive my thanks; imperious circumstances demand a refusal of your favours; nor dare I disclose my name, lest, by some unforeseen

unforeseen mischance, it should be discovered that I am in search of the detested object, who would take the most effectual means of eluding my vigilance." Having given this explanation, the chevalier, after summoning his attendant, and repeating his thanks for the courtesy shewn him, departed from the cottage, leaving Ardolph much perplexed at the strange encounter, which, the more he analyzed, the more he became convinced that his present inmate was implicated in it; a few hours would, however, most probably develop the mystery, as he made no doubt but that the late incident would cause his *protégée* to be more anxious to disclose her tale.

The Princess was so much refreshed by the calm and uninterrupted repose which she had enjoyed, to which she had been so long a stranger, that her appearance was improved in so great a degree, as scarcely to be recognized for the pale and trembling form that had first interested the benevolent cottagers. The roses had once more
revisited

revisited those cheeks which they had so long deserted, and although some traces of languor still remained, yet the *tout ensemble* was so expressively beautiful, that when she entered the apartment where Ardolph sat musing upon the transactions to which he had so lately been a witness, he involuntarily rose, as if at the entrance of a total stranger. After the usual compliments, the conversation naturally turned upon the subject which interested all parties, and with a grace peculiar to herself, the Princess related the eventful history of her life, from the time of the taking of Clagenfurth by Albert, until the moment when she found so hospitable an asylum in the cottage of the generous Ardolph. Astonishment prevented her auditors from interrupting their illustrious *protégée*; and the gentle Constantia, when she recollected the familiarity with which she had treated a person whom she naturally supposed to be much her superior in rank, felt abashed, and attempted to utter an apology, but her voice

voice failed her. The Princess perceived her wounded sensibility, and hastened to relieve her distress, by assuring her, that she should ever feel grateful for the attentive kindness with which she had treated her; and that, whether in prosperity or adversity, she should always acknowledge the amiable Constantia as her friend. This kind and flattering assurance restored the timid maid to her usual confidence; while Ardolph, in a manly and energetic manner, expressed his sense of the high honour conferred upon him by the Princess of Clagenfurth, who, in her distress, had thought him worthy of becoming her protector—"a title," continued he, "which I trust my future conduct will deserve; nor will I disgrace it, though life becomes a sacrifice."

When their minds became composed, for all parties, though for different reasons, felt themselves much agitated, Ardolph reverted to the chevalier who had been introduced during the preceding night by
his

his servants; and as, from the narrative of the Princess of Clagenfurth, he found that Albert was at Mittewald Castle, he made no doubt but that he was the person threatened with the vengeance of the stranger. In the course of the conversation that ensued, he mentioned the circumstance to the Princess, conceiving, that his former conjectures were not erroneous, and that the wrongs which she had received from Albert was one of the principal motives for his seeking him at the Castle. As he proceeded in his remarks, he perceived that the Princess became greatly agitated, till at length, in a voice that trembled from emotion, she requested him to describe the person of his late inmate. It was too remarkable to be mistaken; and no sooner had he complied with the wishes of the Princess, than, faintly uttering, "It was Theodore, my dearest brother," she sunk into the arms of Constantia, who perceiving her countenance change, hastened to support her. It was not, however, long before

before she recovered, and would have apologized for the trouble she occasioned. This, with a look of genuine feeling, Ardolph forbade, and expressed a wish that he had not been so cautious.—“ My generous friend,” said Adeline, “ let it not grieve you that you attended to the dictates of real friendship ; it was impossible for you to divine how closely the interests of the stranger were connected with the person whom you had promised to keep secluded from the eye of prying curiosity ; and so well am I convinced of the feelings of your heart, that had you by any hint disclosed my residence here to an enemy, your future existence would have been a life of misery and sorrow. But,” added the Princess, starting up, as if struck with a new idea, “ it may not yet be too late ; do not you think it possible he may be overtaken ? Oh, what would I give, could it be accomplished ! ” Ardolph heard no more, but hastily saying, “ Madame, it shall be attempted,” he rushed out, before either the Princess.

ness or Constantia had power to detain him, and calling to those servants who were nearest at hand, he instantly left the cottage, and took the nearest road to the Castle, hoping, by his correct knowledge of the country, to arrive at its entrance before his gallant guest.

To account for Theodore's expedition to the Castle of Mittewald, we must cast a retrospect to the period when Matilda and himself were separated from Berthold, at the time their horses were alarmed by the sudden appearance of Alphonsine. As soon as they had gained the command over the frightened animals, they proceeded on a slow pace, expecting that their companion would soon rejoin them; but as the sun was making a rapid descent to the western ocean, and they deemed it would be imprudent to be overtaken by the shades of night, they were obliged to quicken their pace, and proceed to the next village, where it had been previously agreed to remain that evening. As Berthold, however,
did

did not make his appearance, Matilda felt her situation extremely delicate: to travel alone with one who professed a regard for her, although she had no fears for any impropriety of conduct, shocked that ingenuous modesty which rendered her so amiable. Theodore perceived her distress, and endeavoured, by every method in his power, to alleviate it. When they arrived at the house where it had been agreed they should spend the evening, he inquired of its owner whether he had a family; and the man saying that he had two daughters, one of them about twenty years of age, he requested she might be introduced to Matilda, which was readily complied with. The lovely girl felt the merit of this attention, and gratefully smiled her thanks, while her heart felt a redoubled assurance in the honour and rectitude of her lover's principles; and so well pleased was she with her new companion, that, with the glad consent of her father, she engaged her as an attendant upon her person.

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In a short time the youthful travellers arrived at the city of Clagenfurth, where the delighted Matilda was received by the Count Von Werdenberg, with almost parental affection. But the meeting with her maternal uncle, the Chevalier D'Armfeldt, was truly affecting; clasping her in his arms, he gazed upon her with a delight that bespoke the genuine feelings of his heart, while the silent tear bedewed his manly cheek, as he traced the features of a much-loved sister in his newly-discovered niece. When their mutual feelings became more composed, a general inquiry took place; no intelligence had been obtained concerning Albert, notwithstanding the exertions of the Chevalier D'Armfeldt and the Count Von Werdenberg had been unremitting, and the rewards offered of a magnitude sufficient to stimulate the emissaries employed upon the occasion. This gave great uneasiness to Theodore, who, as he had placed his beloved Matilda in safety, felt himself bound to execute a project he
had

had long formed, of seeking the object of his revenge, even if he explored the whole Continent of Europe. To this he was prompted by the recollection, that to him alone was entrusted the means of vengeance. He accordingly took an early opportunity of mentioning his intention to the Count and the Chevalier, who at first endeavoured to persuade him to the contrary; but when he recalled to their minds the prophetic denunciation of the forest sibyl, they could no longer resist; and even Matilda herself, though with tears, acquiesced in the necessity of the enterprise.

Before the departure of Theodore from Clagenfurth, the Count Von Werdenberg had a private conversation with him, in which he pointed out various means as the most likely to ensure success.—“Remember,” said he, “those expressive words of the sibyl, at the moment when she announced that my daughter, whose loss from infancy I had deplored, still lived to bless
at

at some future period an aged father—*‘The fates of Adeline, Matilda, and Zulima, are so intimately connected, that the avenger of one is the avenger of all; their destiny must be decided by the valour of Theodore De Mountfort, aided by the experience of Henry Count Von Werdenberg.’* Go then, my adopted son, pursue the glorious tract pointed out by fate itself; and may that valour which has hitherto shone with unclouded rays, receive additional splendor from your future conduct: already has part of the prophecy been fulfilled; the tyrant Albert has fled before your sword, a dreadful example of a tortured conscience. Remember it is beauty that demands your services, and will hereafter be the rich reward of its champion.”

Fired with the glorious idea, Theodore soon left the spires of Clagenfurth at a distance; and according to the recommendation of the Count, he first visited those places where he thought he should be most likely to meet with Berthold, whom he

knew was employed in endeavouring to make the same discoveries as himself. He was, however, disappointed, although he frequently heard of him. During his search after Berthold, he fancied that he had obtained some intelligence of Albert; and at length, with the utmost diligence, he traced him to the mountains, where, he was informed, stood a Castle, which had been long deserted, though deemed inaccessible to an enemy. Upon a more minute inquiry, he discovered that this sequestered Castle belonged to Albert; this intelligence afforded him great satisfaction, as he doubted not but that the fugitive Prince had retired there as a place of perfect safety. His fertile imagination likewise suggested, that Adeline had possibly been conveyed there, when taken from the convent of St. Veil, by the contrivance of his minions; and his heart glowed with the idea that he should soon have the object of his vengeance within his reach.

Having gained this important knowledge,
his

his resolution was soon formed, but he found some difficulty in putting it in practice. He was ignorant of the direction in which the Castle lay ; neither could he obtain any satisfactory answer to the numerous inquiries he made whenever an opportunity offered. The only intelligence he could procure was, that it was situated in the midst of the Alpine mountains, but so far removed from the common tract, as scarcely ever to be visited even by the most curious travellers. Impatient, however, to proceed, he did not hesitate to explore this wild and dreary country, unaccompanied but by one servant, whose fidelity was unquestionable, and of whose courage he had experienced frequent examples. Many and various were the difficulties which he encountered, while wandering over the mountains, until, by perseverance and good fortune, he at length arrived at the hospitable cottage of Ardolph.

The Princess of Clagenfurth was most sensibly affected at the disinterested friend-

ship of her generous host ; but when cool reflection resumed its powers, which the idea that she had been under the same roof with her brother, to whom alone she had looked forward for future protection, unknown to each other, had deranged, she trembled at the dangers to which he might have exposed himself on her account, should he encounter any of the attendants of Albert, who, she made no doubt, were dispersed in various directions, as soon as her escape from the Castle was discovered, in order, if possible, to intercept her flight. Neither did she conceive the gallant Theodore to be in less peril ; she was well acquainted with his high and daring spirit, and dreaded lest it should plunge him into a situation which no courage could resist : the more she considered it, the more she regretted the ill fortune that had prevented their meeting ; for although she was sensible that no persuasions would induce him to lay aside his determined and just purpose of seeking Albert, yet she properly
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judged

judged that the local knowledge of Ardolph might have been of the greatest advantage to it ; as one of the principal objects of his search being discovered, he would not have been prevented by his oath from communicating his intentions.

The feelings of Constantia, though from a far different cause, were not less acute than those of the Princess ; but she endeavoured to restrain them as much as possible, fearful that their indulgence might appear a tacit reproach to her, who, by relating her interesting narrative, and expressing so great a concern for her brother, had unconsciously excited them. Adeline perceived the amiable motives by which her young friend was actuated, and generously endeavoured to curb her own feelings, in order to excite the spirits of Constantia.—“ Do not,” said she, “ give way to unnecessary fears ; the name of Ardolph is so universally known and respected, that even the most reprobate venerate, although they have not resolution enough to emu-

late his virtues. Frequently has he been the subject of our conversation, when, seated with his family around him, Roberto has been giving a description of the neighbourhood. In his praise every voice is united; be not then grieved for this temporary absence, which I lament equally with yourself; for, believe me, that had I entertained the most distant suspicion of his design, I should never have permitted his departure; but it was so rapidly executed as to defy prevention."

"Forgive, Madame," replied Constantia, while the pearly drop stood trembling in her eyes, which she vainly attempted to suppress, "a weakness which I have frequently endeavoured to conquer, whenever excited by a similar occasion; it is not in the present instance alone that my sensibility has been excited; the absence of Ardolph, however temporary, never fails of raising those emotions which I am sensible ought not to be indulged; but the thoughts of my uncertain destiny, should any unforeseen

foreseen accident happen to that generous man, will ever obtrude themselves; nor can I recover that equanimity of mind, so necessary to happiness, until his presence assures me of his safety."

"I wonder not," replied the Princess, "at the affection which you must naturally entertain for so kind, so exemplary a parent." The tears of Constantia here flowed afresh, which Adeline did not choose to interrupt, but proceeded—"Yet, let the consideration, that a man so uniformly just will never trust the future provision of his child to chance, tranquillize your mind; and, my dear Constantia, although I hope my offer will be useless to you for many years, let me assure you that, whatsoever may be my future destiny, I shall, with the sincerest pleasure, acknowledge you as my adopted child."

"Ah! my dearest Madame," exclaimed Constantia, with energy, "how shall I ever repay this noble generosity, which has removed a weight from my bosom, that, young

as I am, has long proved a drawback to that happiness which this roof has afforded me? Permit me, however, as some small return, to place that confidence in you which gratitude, and even duty, now demands of me; nor will you be surprised at my emotions, when you hear that Ardolph, the kind, the generous Ardolph, is not my father, and that I am only his child by adoption; yet was I united to him even by the stronger tie of parental love, I could not experience greater care or affection than I have from him, ever since reason first permitted me to discriminate."

"This discovery," rejoined the Princess, "while it surprises, gives me also inexpressible pleasure; I may now, without injury to the priority of Ardolph's claims, request a secondary place in your bosom; and while you consider him as your father, let me be possessed of the rights of a mother."

The amiable Constantia, overpowered with the tenderest emotions, sunk into the
arms

arms of the Princess, which were extended to receive her ; words were unnecessary to explain the feelings of her heart, but her looks, beaming with gratitude and respect, were too explicit to be mistaken.

At length the impetuous tide of joy gave place to a calm serenity, that tranquillized the sympathizing bosoms both of Adeline and Constantia ; when the former inquired if Ardolph had ever disclosed her history ? “ Yes, Madame,” replied the latter, “ he related it to me, upon an occasion somewhat similar to the present, as far as he was acquainted with it himself ; but it is so imperfect, as to afford me but little satisfaction.”

“ If, my young friend, it is not inconsistent with any promise of secrecy you have made to Ardolph,” said Adeline, “ I own I should like to know the means by which you came under his protection ; no doubt he knew something of your parents.”

“ Alas !” replied Constantia, “ both Ardolph and myself continue in perfect ignorance

rance of them ; but, Madame, as you have permitted me to consider you as a second mother, and no restriction binds me, it is my wish, as well as my duty, to relate the circumstances which threw me on his protection."

" I shall listen to you with pleasure," rejoined the Princess, " not only as it will gratify a curiosity, now become more impatient than ever, but also as it will beguile the anxious moments during the absence of Ardolph, and prevent our thoughts from dwelling upon subjects more distressing."

" I will endeavour, Madame," replied Constantia, " to relate my tale, as nearly as possible, in the language of my benefactor ; and as it will naturally include some part of his former life, it may perhaps be more interesting on that account. I have before mentioned, that it was upon an occasion somewhat similar to the present, that he judged it proper to communicate it to me ; I knew that an officer from Vienna had been with him, but of the nature of his business

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I was totally unacquainted; yet I perceived, that after he had left the cottage, Ardolph seemed frequently buried in thought, and I sometimes observed him, when he fancied himself not perceived, look at me with a marked attention, while a tear stood trembling in his eye, which he would hastily brush away, for fear of observation. I felt uneasy, although I could not assign any cause, and, young as I was, having but just completed my fourteenth year, a presentiment that the days of my happiness would soon be clouded with sorrow, was so fixed in my mind, that I could not, by any exertion, shake it off. A few days, however, explained the mystery; as, one morning, my kind benefactor thus addressed me:

‘As from the nature of the commission entrusted to me, the period of my return is very uncertain, neither can the events which may take place during my absence be foreseen, I feel it necessary to disclose a circumstance, which it was not my intention to have made known to you, until

your arrival at a more mature age ; and although I foresee that it will at first prove a severe trial to your sensibility, yet I trust that the lessons of resignation to the decrees of Providence, which I have constantly endeavoured to inculcate most strongly in your mind, will enable you to bear the unexpected intelligence with patience and fortitude. You have frequently made inquiries of me respecting your mother, which I have always evaded answering, or have spoken in such ambiguous terms as not to be understood. Alas, my child,' continued he, ' for such ever shall I deem you, neither your mother or father were ever known to me.'—It is needless, Madame," said Constantia, " to repeat my feelings on this occasion ; you can easily appreciate them ; I shall therefore omit a description of them, and continue the narrative of my benefactor, who, after I had recovered sufficiently to attend, resumed his tale.

' About twelve years ago, I was sent by
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the emperor to the court of France, upon a business of the greatest importance ; and after I had concluded it much to my satisfaction, I determined upon making the tour both of that kingdom and of Italy. Accordingly, having provided myself with a sufficient number of servants, well armed, as I was informed that banditti sometimes made their appearance in part of the country through which I should necessarily pass, I set off, elated with the opportunity so fortunately afforded me of viewing those scenes, which I had not only read of, but had heard described, both as the most magnificent and enchanting in Europe. The precautions I had taken, although unnecessary in the commencement of my travels, I found of essential service before their conclusion ; not indeed for my own preservation, but that it enabled me to rescue innocence from a fate it was doomed, by its savage conductors, to experience. You, my dear Constantia, for such is the name I have given you, as the one most beloved, being

being that by which my mother was distinguished, was that victim devoted to lawless power. One particular day, rendered so, not only by your rescue, but by a circumstance which I could never account for, and which I shall presently mention, I was passing over a country reported to be infested by banditti when I experienced so great a delay, as made it impossible for me to reach the place I intended to have taken up my abode at that night. This gave me a considerable degree of uneasiness; for although I was myself well armed, and could depend both on the courage and fidelity of my servants, yet the thoughts of risking their lives in an encounter so uncertain in its final event, distressed me much; but, as there was no alternative, I determined to take every precaution to prevent our being surprised; I therefore called them to me, and after having informed them of the predicament into which our unfortunate detention had thrown us, I gave them such directions as I thought most prudent in our situation.

situation. I had often heard that the banditti had accomplices stationed at the different post-houses and villages, who, although they never joined them in their predatory excursions, were considered as belonging to their society; these men acted either as hostlers, or some other menial capacity, and were employed in sending to their comrades intelligence of travellers, describing their numbers, their arms, and such other particulars as might make them an easy prey. It had also been hinted to me, that if an opportunity happened, they would unload the arms of the travellers, the prime only being left, to avoid suspicion of the treachery. After our arrival at the post-house from which we had set off that morning, and where the want of horses had so disagreeably detained us, I observed a person, who, without appearing to be curious, seemed constantly employed near us, watching our motions; but as I had no suspicion of any sinister intentions towards us at the moment, I took no further notice
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of it. Recalling, however, the circumstance to my recollection, at the time I was giving the directions to the servants, I suspected that he might be of the description I had been guarded against, especially as I knew he might have had an opportunity if he wished it; I therefore desired them to examine their arms, at the same time inspecting my own pistols. To their great astonishment, two of their carbines were found unloaded, as were my pistols; and I then recollected to have left them in the room when I went out to hasten the horses. These circumstances of course prepared us for an attack; determined, however, to get as near as possible to the end of our journey, we hastened forward, until darkness obliged us to slacken our pace, and to seek the most secure shelter we could find. It was not only impolitic, but impossible to sleep; we therefore passed some hours in anxious silence, fearing to enter into conversation, lest our voices should discover the place of our retreat to those whom we
had

had great reason to suppose would attack us. Some hours passed away without our having experienced any interruption, and I began to hope that we should escape with impunity ; but, advancing a few paces from the spot which I had chosen as my place of rest, I fancied that I heard the sound of voices, as if in earnest discourse. By the appearance of the horizon, I judged that the break of day was at no great distance, and I felt an irresistible impulse to discover those who had taken their position so near us : proceeding, therefore, with the utmost caution, I found means to approach close enough to the spot from whence the sounds proceeded, as to distinguish their conversation ; and, to my great astonishment, it was carried on in the Persian language ; most fortunately I understood it, as, having accompanied an embassy to the Persian court, at which I resided for some years, I made myself a complete master of it. Satisfied, from their conversation, that their employment was of a different nature from
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the banditti, although in my eyes equally atrocious, I determined, if possible, to prevent the completion of it; I accordingly returned to my attendants, and acquainting them with the discovery I had made, explained my intentions to them. They entered into my plan with great eagerness, and as I knew there were but two, I conceived, from the superiority of our numbers, that we should experience but little resistance.

“ The morning had just began to break, when, with my attendants, I suddenly appeared before the astonished Persians: knowing that it was their usual custom to pay their adoration to the rising sun, I expected to have found them at their devotions, and off their guard; but whether they omitted these duties, or had already paid them, I know not; however we found them prepared to recommence their journey. I addressed them in their own language, and told them of my determination; when, with a resolution worthy a better cause,

cause, they resolved to yield only with their lives. You, my dear child, was lying upon a bank, unconscious of the gathering tumult around you, as they had not as yet disturbed the sweet sleep you seemed to enjoy. It had nearly been your last; as one of the ruffians, perhaps conscious of the final event, and determined to disappoint my interference, took advantage of a pause, and attempted to plunge his sword into your innocent breast; but one of my servants, who kept a watchful eye over their motions, perceived the atrocious intent, and prevented the threatened blow. A severe contest now ensued, which, notwithstanding our superiority, was extended to a considerable length, until nature, exhausted by the repeated wounds which they had received, could contend no longer, and both fell victims to their rash valour. Thus I became the protector of you, my dear Constantia, who, the first moment of opening your eyes, seemed to thank me by a smile, that at once rivetted my affections; and

and having no children of my own, I that instant took a solemn oath to make you mine by adoption. Before I left the spot, I carefully examined the bodies, in hopes to find some documents by which I could discover your parents; as, notwithstanding the increasing regard I felt for you, and the pain it would have given me to have resigned my precious charge, I felt it a duty incumbent upon me, to use every endeavour to obtain information, which might enable me to restore happiness to those unhappy beings from whom you had been severed. There was, however, nothing about their persons that could afford any clue for information, except a picture of a lady, richly adorned with brilliants, and which, from the extreme likeness to yourself, which I have since observed, was doubtless the portrait of your mother: this was fastened to a chain, and had been, I suppose, taken from your neck, and secreted by the ruffian in whose vest it was concealed, in order to keep it for himself.

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This perhaps, joined to the little intelligence I had previously obtained when listening to their conversation, and which I will repeat to you, may, at some future period, be of service in making the wished-for discovery.

“ When I first came within a sufficient distance to distinguish words, one of them said—‘ I wish I had never been employed in this business ; it is a troublesome job to take the charge of such an infant so far as Persia ; besides, I feel some qualms of conscience, for an officer of this country formerly was very kind to me when I was taken prisoner and carried into Turkey, and I have some suspicion it was the father of this little girl.’—‘ What signifies that ?’ said his comrade, ‘ we are well paid, and the commands of our master must be obeyed.’—‘ But what makes him so anxious about this infant ?’ said the other.

‘ I know not that he cares about her,’ he replied ; ‘ neither do I imagine that he knows of its existence : it was the mother who
was

was the object of his wishes ; but as death has defeated that part of our commission, I resolved to convey the infant to him, lest he should suspect that we had been unfaithful to the trust reposed in us.'

" A few words were now uttered in so low a voice as prevented my hearing them distinctly, but, from the reply, I suppose that one of them had inquired the reason of their master's conduct, as the other gave the following answer:—' You remember that his niece was lost at the taking of Bas-sora, and was for a long time supposed to be dead, until at last it was discovered that she had been carried a prisoner into Turkey, where she had married a foreign officer, who had conducted her to his own country. This intelligence so exasperated her uncle, that he vowed the severest vengeance against his unfortunate niece ; and having, through the means of his numerous emissaries employed, discovered the place of their retreat, he determined to have her seized, and carried back to Persia.'

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“ This was all I could collect ; you were too young to afford me any intelligence, and my removal to this sequestered retreat immediately upon my return from my tour, effectually prevented my making those inquiries I should have thought it my duty to have instituted ; but, if I can guess at the situation which your parents held in life, they must have been of the highest rank. The declaration of the Persian emissaries, together with the jewels which decorate the picture of the person I suppose to have been your mother, is a convincing proof of it.—I need not,’ said he, ‘ add the satisfaction which I have daily felt since fortune gave me to you as a second parent, and I confess myself most amply repaid by your dutiful attention to me.’

“ Such, Madame, was the intelligence that I received from Ardolph, who has constantly endeavoured to obtain information, whenever the duties imposed upon him oblige him to mix with the world ; hitherto
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his exertions have been of no effect ; but although it would give me the greatest happiness to be made acquainted with the name of my family, yet the gratitude, the respect, and affection I feel for my generous protector, can never cease but with life itself."

"Many thanks, my dear girl," said the Princess, finding that she had concluded her tale, "for your interesting narrative : but suffer not your spirits to be dejected ; not only my exertions, but those of my family, shall be employed in your service ; and I doubt not but some clue may be found, by which your surviving parent may be discovered, who, I make no doubt, heart-broken at the event which deprived him of his child, has retired into some seclusion, to lament the double loss he sustained. But you mentioned a picture ; is it in your possession ?"—"Yes, Madame," replied Constantia, "Ardolph resigned it to my care, at the time he made the discovery

very that I was his child only by adoption; but I seldom wear it, as it excites emotions I find difficult to controul."

Upon opening the case, Adeline was surprised at the richness of the jewels, which encircled a countenance far more beautiful than the jewels themselves. She gazed on it with the deepest attention, frequently casting her eyes upon Constantia, whose likeness to the miniature was a convincing proof that it was the portrait of her mother. After having examined for some time, and making judicious remarks on it, she was preparing to replace it in the case, when accidentally touching a secret spring, before unobserved, it opened, and discovered the portrait of a young nobleman. Adeline almost started with surprise; the features seemed familiar to her, and she could almost have fancied it was Theodore, but that was impossible. The discovery, however, was of the utmost importance, and Constantia, who was ignorant of such a circumstance, felt her hopes revive, as she

little doubted but that it was the resemblance of her father, which she now beheld for the first time; the idea suffused her eyes with tears, and awakened that sensibility, which was soon to be more strongly excited, by the sudden and unexpected discovery not only of the names but the rank of her parents; for while the Princess was minutely examining the portraits, she discovered a small cavity between them, in which was a paper containing these words: *Henry Count Von Werdenberg, united to the Princess Zulima, niece to the Sophi of Persia, in the year 1475.* The mystery was now unravelled, and the parents of the hitherto unknown Constantia, or, as we must in future call her, Zulima, ascertained without a doubt. The Princess, upon this unexpected denouement, experienced the greatest satisfaction; the ties of consanguinity now united her to her lovely friend, and she looked forward to the time when she might be able to introduce their new-found relative to the united houses of De Mountfort

Mountfort and Von Werdenberg. The sensations, however, of Zulima were of a different nature, and so complicated, that she could hardly define them herself. The joy that she was no longer the orphan Constantia, deprived of all natural protection, and dependant solely upon the compassion of others, but of a family inferior to none in the German empire, was considerably abated, when she recollected that she was still in ignorance whether her father existed or not. Of her mother's fate, the relation of Ardolph was a sufficient conviction; but she had remarked, that even at the interesting moment of discovery, the Princess had never betrayed the least knowledge of her father, more than that the families of De Mountfort and Von Werdenberg were united; this cast a gloom over that satisfaction which she otherwise experienced. It did not pass unobserved by Adeline, who, by various well-timed observations, endeavoured to amuse her mind, while she pointed out to her the happiness

which the generous Ardolph would experience, when, on his return, he found the dearest wishes of his adopted child thus unexpectedly gratified.

“ Indeed, Madame,” replied Zulima, “ I confess the injustice I am guilty of, in suffering any drawback to the happiness I could so little expect to obtain, to influence my mind at such a moment ; yet I feel it imperfect, while ignorant of a father’s existence ; and from your silence respecting him, I have too much reason to fear that I must still consider myself as an orphan, except in the affection of Ardolph and the Princess of Clagenfurth.”

Adeline, who was totally ignorant of the history of the Count Von Werdenberg, felt the full force of this appeal, and although it was not in her power to ease the anxiety of her newly-discovered relative, yet the encouraging remarks which she made upon the unexpected reverses of fortune which they had both so lately experienced, served to infuse a hope, that the Count might yet
be

be in existence, and that, as had been before suggested, the death of an adored wife, and the subsequent loss of her lovely representative, might have had the effect of driving him from worldly pursuits, and induce him to spend the remainder of his life in a solitary seclusion. But although these ideas appeared at the first view discouraging, yet, when they were more minutely canvassed, they appeared in a more flattering view, for they little doubted but that when it was publicly known that a daughter of the Count was still living, and under the most honourable protection, that it would, by some means or other, reach the ears of him who was most immediately interested in it, if still in existence, who would immediately emerge from the obscurity which her long supposed loss had occasioned him to court: they accordingly busied themselves in forming various plans to bring the desired event to perfection; but many were the difficulties which occurred at the present moment. From

the little that they could collect from the narrative of Ardolph, her relations were of the first rank and consequence in Persia, and from the trouble they had already taken, it was not unreasonable to suppose that if they gained intelligence of her still being in existence, that they might make another attempt to gain possession of her person, unless a secure refuge was found for her, which might bid defiance to all their plans. It was now that the Princess, for the first time, felt the loss of power ; for herself she cared not, but to assist the friendless and unfortunate, was a pleasure that afforded her the sincerest satisfaction. “ Alas ! my dear Zulima,” said she, “ for by that name I shall address you, convinced of your right to it, as it is the general custom to call the first-born female after its mother, at present we are both helpless orphans ; both dependant upon the protection and assistance of others : circumstanced therefore as we are, I confess myself at a loss in what manner to advise ; let us then wait with patience the
return

return of the generous Ardolph, to whom I am certain this discovery will give no less satisfaction than it has to myself."

The time of his absence seemed to pass with leaden wings, and despondency had again began to resume its sway, when a bustle from the exterior engaged their attention, and immediately several voices were heard exclaiming "He is returned!" At this joyful sound both the Princess and Zulima started from their seats, and were hastening to meet them, when the door opened, and Ardolph, accompanied by Sebastian, entered the apartment: upon perceiving the latter, the Princess stopped, a sudden tremor seized her, and she was forced to resume her seat, at the same time saying in a faint voice, scarcely to be distinguished, "Alas! was this the wished-for guest?"—"Madame," said Ardolph, "be composed; I can easily understand your thoughts; but when you have heard the result of my journey, I flatter myself that although your beloved brother is not re-

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turned

turned with me, yet the intelligence I am able to give you concerning him, through the means of this friend, (looking at Sebastian) will, in a great degree, banish the fears you entertain for his safety."

"Friend!" echoed Adeline, in a tone of doubt, mixed with surprise.

"How unfortunate am I," said Sebastian, approaching the Princess with every mark of humility and respect, "that my wishes to serve one whom inclination, joined to the commands of the chief I serve, has long prompted me not only to assist, but also to punish those who have so cruelly oppressed her, has been unknown! Perhaps, Madame," continued he, "you recollect having once seen me in the forest, when you took shelter there."—The Princess bowed her acquiescence.—"Alas! one moment's delay longer would have rescued you from the villain who had been guilty of so notorious a deception; but fate ordained it otherwise; the uncertainty I was under respecting your situation, was the
sole

sole reason that prevented my interference, as it is the general command of my chief never to molest a female, or permit one to be molested; and as you appeared, although melancholy, not to resist the wishes of your attendant, I dared not interfere, although I knew him to be a villain of a superior order."

"Have you," said the Princess, "known the person who was with me for any length of time?"

Sebastian held down his head, as if confused at a question so unexpected; it was, however, but the confusion of a moment, as, recovering himself, he replied in a firm and manly tone, "With sorrow I must confess, Madame, that I have; it was this knowledge that induced me to suspect his designs upon you, and ultimately proved the means of my discovering the place where, by the command of Albert, and his own machinations, you were confined."

There was an appearance of candour in the manner of Sebastian that engaged the

good opinion of the Princess, who, anxious to know the reasons which had induced him to penetrate the interior of Mittewald Castle, said, in a tone of cordiality, "I will not disguise from you, Sebastian, that Martuccio, when in the dungeon, just prior to his being encountered by you and your companion, related to me part of the history of his former life, in order, as he said, to convince me of his candour; but I am convinced that the principal circumstances were so glossed over and perverted, that actions which he attributed to necessity were the result of his own free choice."—The Princess then gave the outlines of his conversation, concluding, "I have been thus explicit, as I wished to know the manner in which you discovered my residence at the Castle, and whether your encounter with Martuccio was only the consequence of accident, or premeditated?"

Before Sebastian could reply, Ardolph said, "Your curiosity, Madame, is not only natural, but I will venture to assert, will be
completely

completely satisfied ; and the narrative of Sebastian, which I trust he will oblige us with after taking some refreshment, will preclude the necessity of a repetition of those parts of the transactions in which I have been engaged since I left you, and which were so far from any thing I had reason to divine, that I am astonished at the secrecy which has been so long maintained without any suspicion."

Refreshment was accordingly ordered to be brought in immediately, and while they were engaged in recruiting their harrassed spirits, the Princess, whose vivacity had in some measure returned, exclaimed, looking at Zulima at the same time, in a manner that implied a wish of total silence upon her part, " Since you chuse to tantalize two impatient and inquisitive females, we will shew you, in our turn, that we can keep a secret ; and I may venture to assert, that however important yours may be, that ours will match, if not exceed it."

Ardolph, whose eyes had wandered from
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the Princess to his adopted child, whose confusion was evident, was about to address her, when Adeline, with a smile of good humour, exclaimed, "No questions, my good friend, at present; besides, it is not fair to attack the weakest, who you know cannot resist any application that a person for whom she has deservedly the greatest love and esteem, may make."

"Well then," replied Ardolph, in the same tone, "I find it is impossible to resist the commands of beauty, so that I must remain contented with performing quarantine, until Sebastian's recital takes off the imposed restraint; let us then make haste and finish our repast, for I see that the curiosity of all parties is upon the stretch."

The table was soon cleared, and Sebastian, after having thanked the Princess for the liberality of sentiment with which she had treated his former conduct, began taking up the story from his leaving the cottage with Bernardo, after the departure of Adeline from it; for although some parts of it
were

were already known, it was necessary to refer to it in a cursory manner.

“No sooner,” said Sebastian, addressing his discourse more particularly to the Princess, “had Martuccio and yourself left the cottage, and we were free from the restraint which your presence necessarily occasioned, than I made inquiries of Marian if she had observed any particular conduct in either of our guests, before I arrived at the cottage? The answers she gave were such as convinced me that I was right in my conjectures, and that you was an unwilling companion to the wretch who was with you: at first I confess that I was much surprised that you had not requested the assistance of myself and my brother Bernardo; but an observation made by Marian convinced me that as our dress and appearance were singular, you took us for banditti, and consequently dreaded lest you should fall into worse hands than those in whose power you then was.”

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The Princess bowed her assent, and Sebastian proceeded.

“It is true, Madame, that your suspicions were in some measure correct, as by the misinformed part of the world we may be given that appellation, and consequently be indiscriminately considered as similar to those who, both in conduct and manner, deserve that name ; but since our present chief has accepted the command of our association, we are become the guardians and protectors of virtue, and the punishers of vice ; Princes and Potentates court our alliance, nor does the Emperor himself disdain to solicit our assistance.”

“Excuse my interruption, but my curiosity is much excited,” said the Princess, “by your description : dare I ask the name of your chief ?”

“Madame,” replied Sebastian, “it is a question that, by the solemn rules of our society, I must not have answered, even if it was in my power ; but he is totally unknown

known to us, except by the one which he thought proper to assume when he first joined the band—that is Berthold; and we have remarked, that since he became possessed of the knowledge that you had been decoyed from the convent of St. Veil, that his manners have been more restless, and that, neglecting all other pursuits, his time has been engaged, and his mind employed, in the attempt to discover your retreat; and as I flatter myself that I possess no inconsiderable part of his esteem, I deem it the most fortunate accident of my life, that I have been the happy instrument in accomplishing his wishes, and those of your other friends. But I beg pardon for this digression; I will resume my narrative.

“As I was convinced that I discovered your reason for not requesting protection from us, my first impulse was to pursue the tract that I supposed Martuccio would take; but I soon found that he had been too cunning for me; and being therefore satisfied that there was little or no chance
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of overtaking you, I ceased the pursuit, and repaired to the rendezvous, where we had received orders to meet our chief as soon as possible: we arrived there but just time enough to take a part in an expedition that had been planned, so that I had no opportunity of mentioning the circumstances until it was over, which, by the valour of Theodore de Mountfort, was soon effected."

"My brother!" exclaimed the Princess, "was he engaged in it?"

Sebastian was much surprised at this question, as he did not imagine that the Princess had been so long ignorant of an event in which she was so materially interested; and after having expressed his astonishment, which was attributed to the real cause, the retirement which she had lived in, he related the whole particulars of the engagement, and the extraordinary flight of Albert.

Adeline, whom wonder at such unexpected tidings had kept silent, for she had placed little confidence in Martuccio's relation

lation of Albert's defeat, esteeming it only as a manœuvre of his to forward his own designs, returned her thanks to Providence, for this happy turn in the affairs of her family, saying, at the same time, to her newly-adopted daughter, "Let the present instance be a lasting memorial to you, that, sooner or later, vice will receive its punishment, and virtue its reward. But proceed, Sebastian, and excuse an interruption, which such unlooked-for intelligence occasioned. Oh ! how fortunate was my escape from the power of Albert at this critical moment !"

Sebastian continued.

"After the city was taken, and regularity restored, I acquainted my chief with the transactions at the cottage, and it gave him some satisfaction to trace you even thus far, as he could give his directions for a further pursuit, with a greater precision than if he had remained ignorant of the point to which you was travelling ; and as a meeting of the chiefs who had conducted the enterprize

enterprize had been convened, he commanded me to attend. These consisted of the Chevalier D'Armfeldt, Theodore de Mountfort, and Henry Count Von Werdenberg, who had long been supposed dead, but had now unexpectedly declared himself."

Hearing the name of the latter, Zulima shrieked out, "My father!" and sunk back into the arms of Ardolph, who was fortunately near enough to prevent her falling. All was now confusion and amazement, and it was some time before they thought of applying remedies to the lovely invalid. The Princess, however, first recovered from her surprise, and requested Sebastian to call the female attendants, telling him that she must beg the postponement of the remaining part of his narrative for a short period. As soon as the required assistance came, Zulima was conveyed without difficulty to her own apartment; she was not insensible, but felt such an oppression upon her heart, as rendered her unable to use the smallest exertion.

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In the mean time, Ardolph looked with impatience at the Princess for an explanation, which, after having seen Zulima properly attended to, she gave in the presence of Sebastian, who had particularly requested to be made acquainted with the means by which her affinity was discovered, as he knew, he said, that the Count would be most minute in his inquiries when he saw him.

It is impossible to determine the passion that reigned predominant in the breast of the benevolent Ardolph; for while he most sincerely rejoiced at the discovery which had been made, and which placed his beloved charge in a station which even his most romantic hopes could never have expected, yet the idea of being separated from a companion who had from infancy been the sole consolation of his widowed heart, gave him a pang that almost overturned the firmness of his disposition. Their composure being in a great measure
restored,

restored, Ardolph, in a manner unusually solemn and impressive, adverted to the singular coincidence of circumstances in these unexpected discoveries, which seemed delayed, by the decrees of Providence itself, to be disclosed at one and the same time—"It is our duty, therefore," said he, "to submit to those decrees without a murmur, although ——"—At that instant Zulima, whose faculties had been only suspended, and by the assiduities of her attendant, had soon recovered from the effect of joy and surprise, entered the room. Traces of tears were still visible, and as Ardolph advanced towards her, she threw herself into his arms, in which she was clasped with the most affectionate kindness; but perceiving she still continued much agitated, he said, "Let not the adopted child of my love give way to an excess of sensibility, which, carried to too great an extent, instead of being an amiable virtue, becomes the contrary, as it serves only to enervate the frame, and to prevent

prevent a performance of those duties that are required of us. Why, my dear Zulima——”

“ Oh, call me your Constantia, as before,” cried the still weeping girl.

“ No,” replied Ardolph, “ your affinity to the Count Von Werdenberg is so clearly demonstrated, that it is proper you should be accustomed to a name which your father must have retained so great an affection for, and which is undoubtedly your right, as the eldest daughter is ever called after her mother: but think not that my love will change with a name; no, my child, still will you be as dear to me as ever; and I am convinced, though years have passed since a strict friendship subsisted between your father and myself, whose supposed death I lamented as sincerely as any of his dearest connexions, that his noble nature will frequently indulge me with the society of my adopted daughter. You look surprised; the present is not, however, the time to dissolve the mystery, but it will

soon arrive. This unexpected and happy *dénouement* will hasten an event I had long since determined upon, and for which every thing is nearly prepared ; the way is now clear before me, as the difficulties which before clogged it, cease by the re-appearance of Henry Count Von Werdenberg ; nor let my dear Zulima be surprised, if she sees me the inmate of her long-lost father's abode ; at present I dare not be more explicit ; the most powerful motives oblige me to be silent respecting myself, or it would be my greatest pleasure that I should make my adopted child, and the Princess of Clagenfurth, my confidants."

"My beloved protector, you have now," replied Zulima, "rendered me almost completely happy ; for I confess, that although from the time when I was first made acquainted that I was your child by adoption only, the thoughts of my real parents have been the perpetual attendants both on my sleeping and waking hours ; yet at the moment when I was blessed with the discovery

very that the one whose uncertain fate had so long distressed me was still in existence, and that I might soon find myself clasped in his arms, the idea of being separated from the protector of my infancy threw such a gloom over my brightest prospects, as almost to make me in thought undutiful."

"Come," said the Princess, willing to give relief both to Zulima and Ardolph, "remember that there are other discoveries in reserve for us, which I am rather impatient to know; let us then hear the remainder of Sebastian's story, which will give a turn to our too-acute feelings."

"With pleasure, Madame," replied Sebastian, "more particularly as Ardolph knows that I am pressed for time."

"True," said Ardolph, "I had forgotten that; you can, however, recapitulate the principal heads, and what may be omitted in the latter part, I can, if necessary, supply in your absence."

Sebastian then proceeded.

"I mentioned,

“ I mentioned, Madame, that I was commanded to attend the chiefs of the expedition ; at the conclusion of their consultation, in which every point was most minutely canvassed, Berthold called me to his private apartment, and gave me two commissions, both of which I am proud to have effected ; they were the discovery of the Princess of Clagenfurth and of Zulima, the long lost daughter of the Count Von Werdenberg.”

“ How,” said Zulima, in amaze, “ does my father know of my existence ?”

“ Not exactly, Madame,” replied Sebastian, “ and some time back, I am certain, from his well-known character in disbelieving the supernatural power of those who foretel events, he would have treated the intelligence with contempt and derision ; but having lately, by experience, proved several predictions correct, he has been naturally induced to cherish a hope that this, the truth of which would restore his long-lost happiness, might be so.”

Sebastian

Sebastian then related the prediction of the sibyl of the forest, together with the subsequent events; and this explanation afforded a clue to the meaning of Theodore, when he declared himself appointed to be the avenger of his family. "Having," continued Sebastian, "received all my instructions, and various places of rendezvous being appointed, where I could either meet or send intelligence to my chief, as the urgency of the case might require, I immediately left Clagenfurth, and calling at the cottage in the forest, met with some of my associates there, to whom I gave the directions I had been entrusted with. There was a youth, whom my chief was most particularly attentive to, as he had given him an education much superior to what his apparent condition entitled him; nor did he even suffer him to go out, unless attended by himself, or several of our associates; this youth I was to meet at the cottage, in order to conduct him to a place of safety, until the important business we had

in hand was terminated, as from the nature of his employment, Berthold could neither pay the attention he wished himself, or spare the number of men he deemed necessary for that especial purpose. As I knew the wishes of my chief, I particularly attached myself to him, especially on the journey towards the place I was commanded to conduct him. The way thither was no great distance from Mittewald Castle, and as, from the circumstances I have before alluded to, I judged it might be not only the place to which the Princess of Clagenfurth had been taken, but also the retreat of Albert himself, I determined to make use of the knowledge I was in possession of, respecting the secret entrance into the northern side, and endeavour, if possible, to discover if it had been visited since our final departure from it. I also had some hopes of finding out the state of the other parts, and the number of those left as guards. Having therefore left all our retinue at a sufficient distance from the entrance

trance

france to prevent their discovery of it, I proceeded thither, accompanied by the youth I have mentioned, who so earnestly entreated me to let him go, that I could not refuse, although I was fearful that such an indulgence would meet with the severe reprehension of my chief, should I be obliged to disclose it. It was with some pleasure I perceived that by its appearance it did not seem to have been used since the poor remains of my former associates, of which, as Martuccio observed, three only survived the destruction that fell upon them, left the spot.

“ I was well aware of the difficulties which we might experience in being supplied with the common necessities of life during our passing over these wild regions ; I had therefore taken the precaution to furnish ourselves amply with provisions, so that I was in no dread of being in want, by any trifling delay of time ; and as my object was to explore as much of the Cusile as I could, without hazarding a discovery, for I

knew that all the parts, except the northern wing, were either inhabited or regularly guarded, I came to the resolution of remaining there for a few days. It was my wish to discover a communication between the habitable part and that which had so long been deserted, for although I had passed some years there, I had never had an opportunity of making any examination, although I was convinced that one must exist. But although both my young companion and myself used the utmost diligence, and discovered many secret places, even in the northern scite, that were so nicely concealed as not to be discernible, still we were unable to find the one most material ; but it is now evident, from Martuccio's success in carrying off the Princess from her own apartments into the dungeons beneath, that he was acquainted with it.

“ As we returned one morning into the great hall, we advanced towards the window, when my companion pointed out to
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me a female, who seemed alarmed, and desirous of escaping our observation. The idea that it might be the Princess of Clagenfurth immediately suggested itself; but the distance was too great to enable me to distinguish her features, more especially as she seemed to conceal them: a fortunate circumstance, however, convinced me that I was right, as, on her attempting to retreat, the wind blew aside her veil, sufficiently for me to have a perfect view of her countenance. I was now much distressed to decide upon the measures I ought to take; the safety of the youth committed to my care had been made by Berthold the primary consideration; and although, in my own mind, I considered the discovery I had made of far greater consequence, yet knowing the character of my chief, and that he never gave a positive command without there was an absolute necessity of its being obeyed, I determined, although with some reluctance, to proceed according to the plan laid down for me; and happy am I that

I did not suffer my own arrogance to counteract the wise policy of my superior. Yet still I was at a loss ; for although it was necessary for me to conduct my charge to the place of his retreat, it was equally so that I should give the earliest intelligence possible of my success to Berthold, as it would occasion him to alter the plans he had formed : it is true, I could have sent one of those who accompanied us, but that, for various reasons, was hazardous, as each had their respective commissions, and the breaking of one link in the chain might occasion the destruction of the whole. While meditating upon the subject, for we had again began our journey, my young companion, who amused himself in viewing the country through which we travelled, suddenly aroused me from my reverie, by saying, ‘ Look, Sebastian, is not that one of our companions ? he seems in the same uniform.’ Before I could turn my eyes to the spot at which he pointed, there was no one to be seen ; and though he still persisted

sisted in it, I almost considered it as fancy ; when recollecting the predicament I was in, and the service it would prove to our cause, should it be one of our associates, I resolved upon making a secret, but well-known signal, which would certainly bring him to me. I accordingly applied the bugle to my lips, and sounded those notes peculiar upon the occasion ; to my great joy they were answered, and in a few minutes I discovered my brother Bernardo advancing towards me : our satisfaction was mutual, as he told me he had been sent by our chief, who had heard I had inquired for him at one of the places of rendezvous, and had sent him to find me, and to order me, if possible, to be with him at a particular spot, upon a fixed day. I now acquainted Bernardo with the discovery I had made, and requested him to return to Berthold with the greatest expedition, and inform him of my success ; and that as soon as I had executed the first part of his orders, which that circumstance had unavoidably

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delayed,

delayed, I would endeavour to join him at the time appointed, though it was so close at hand, that I was fearful I could not accomplish it; in which case, as I conjectured this intelligence might necessarily oblige him to alter some part of his plan, I ventured to suggest a wish, that if it would not derange his designs, he would wait a short period for me. Bernardo immediately departed, and I placed the charge entrusted to my care with the person I was directed to; yet, notwithstanding, all my diligence, I could not reach the place of rendezvous so soon as I was ordered, and even when I arrived, I was so exhausted by the exertions I had made, as scarcely to be able to give my chief a connected account of my expedition.

“ The praises which I received from my chief, in the presence of the greater part of my associates, who were convened upon a particular occasion, were, however, of such a balsamic nature as to render me careless of the fatigue I had undergone; and some cordials, which were liberally expended

pended upon the occasion, soon restored my former vigour. A consultation was immediately held, and I found that Berthold had entertained suspicions similar to my own, respecting Albert, for which reason he was concentrating all his force at a little distance from the Castle, but so as he could not be discovered, in order that if, upon examination, it should be found practicable, to attack it. After various plans, unnecessary to mention, had been proposed and rejected, it was finally determined that some person should endeavour to ascertain the state of the garrison, and that, in the mean time, dispatches should be sent to Clagenfurth with the information already obtained, and to hasten the arrival of Theodore, whose presence, from the prophecy of the sibyl, was deemed necessary for any real success against Albert. The above determination was no sooner adopted by Berthold, than I immediately offered myself, to obtain the wished-for information from the Castle; 'not,' said

I, addressing myself to my associates, 'that I have the arrogance to suppose that I should be more successful than any other of my comrades, was I not possessed of some knowledge respecting it, which I am satisfied is almost exclusively my own, as only two others are in the possession of it, one of whom I know the fate of. and the other is one of our most inveterate enemies, who, I trust, will be caught in his own snare, if my suspicions are right. Prudence, at the present moment, prevents my saying more, nor can I discover the knowledge I allude to, to any except our chief, and to him only upon conditions that a solemn oath obliges me to impose.'

" I immediately withdrew with Berthold, having been highly gratified by the generosity of my comrades, who, far from feeling any envy at my being thus distinguished, unanimously declared, that as I had been the first means of the discovery, no one could have any pretensions to dispute my eligibility for bringing it to a conclusion.

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I now, after mentioning the reasons of those restrictions a former oath obliged me to put upon him, but which would soon be over, told him of the secret passage, the manner in which it had become known to me, not forgetting at the same time the history of Martuccio. The relation gave infinite pleasure to Berthold, and he returned to our associates, with a countenance so animated, as convinced them that the subject we had been conversing upon was of the utmost importance. ‘My friends,’ exclaimed he, ‘Sebastian has informed me of a circumstance that will not only ensure us the success of our present enterprize, but may, at some future period, prove of such essential service to our whole establishment, that we can scarcely make him amends sufficiently expressive of its value. You, my comrades,’ continued he, ‘have long known me; and that during the time I have held the command, I have never deceived or misled you, by magnifying advantages, or lessening misfortunes; you will, I hope,

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I hope, therefore, give me credit at present for the assertion I have made, as prudence prevents a public disclosure ; yet I trust the time will soon arrive when all will enjoy the fruits of it.' Such was the flattering distinction paid me, which I am induced to mention only as a proof of the unbounded influence which this extraordinary man possesses over the various passions of those with whom he is connected.

"In pursuance of the scheme I had formed, I repaired with the utmost expedition to the neighbouring monastery, where I knew a monk resided, in whom I could place the most explicit confidence, and from whom I trusted to receive the necessary information. Upon my arrival there, I found that their conversation turned upon a report that the northern apartments of the Castle were still haunted, and that one of the females of the Castle had been so terrified at the sight of two figures in the large hall, that she had been ill ever since, and that her recovery was despaired of.

This intelligence gave me real concern, as I had no doubt but that the female alluded to was the Princess of Clagenfurth, particularly as I recollected she appeared extremely weak and agitated when she left her retreat. My plans were now threatened to be annihilated; at all events, it was necessary they should be postponed, until I knew the result of the illness. But how to ascertain the fact, or the state of her disorder, was a difficulty I could find no means of overcoming. Here fortune stood my friend. The person with whom I was formerly acquainted is now the well-known father St. Eustace; upon his present character I need not expatiate; I determined to consult him, and in order to obtain his assistance, I candidly told him every circumstance, and the motives which prompted me to engage in it so earnestly. As I expected, he engaged to assist me in every way he could; 'although,' said he, 'the keeper of the Castle, possessed of every common virtue, has not omitted to practise

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tise that of strict obedience to the commands of his chief; and from the unusual strict orders which he has lately received, and which are now by your mission accounted for, he dares not admit any person, of whatsoever degree he may be, into the interior of the Castle.'

“ One day as we were in earnest discourse, and endeavouring to strike out some plan by which this vigilance could be eluded, a lay-brother came into the cell, and in the greatest haste informed St. Eustace that Roberto, the captain of Mitewald Castle, was at the gate, and requested that he would accompany him back, in order to see a person for whom he was much interested, and who was so ill as to baffle all the medicines which had been prescribed for her. A thought instantly suggested itself to me; I was not unacquainted with physic, and I entreated St. Eustace, whose person I found, though not his fame, was entirely unknown at the Castle, to suffer me to represent him upon the occasion, which,

which, after some hesitation, he consented to, the more willingly, he said, as by what I had told him, he was convinced that the disorder was occasioned only by fright; so, taking a bottle from a closet, he added, 'Give this, and I will answer for its efficacy.' Roberto had become impatient, and before I could make the necessary transformation, the lay-brother returned to hasten St. Eustace; he seemed surprised, but a look from the father had such an immediate effect, that he resumed his accustomed humility, and attended me in silence to the outward gates. The result need not be repeated; suffice it to mention, that taking advantage of the confusion, I obtained the principal part of the intelligence necessary, and returned to my associates, after having returned my borrowed habit to its proper owner, who not only blessed our enterprise, but offered any assistance in his power to bestow."

"May I not," said the Princess with a smile,

smile, "guess who St. Eustace formerly was?"

"You may, Madame," replied Sebastian, with a faltering, yet solemn tone, "but a most sacred oath binds me to silence."

"Assure yourself," rejoined the Princess, who immediately perceived that Sebastian was much hurt at her request; "that your secret shall in future be always most religiously respected by me; neither shall the most distant hint upon the subject ever again escape me; and I am certain I can answer for the discretion of your other friends here."

They bowed, and Sebastian, whose countenance discovered the pleasure which he had received by their tacit acquiescence to the wish of the Princess, resumed his narrative.

"Upon my return to the place of rendezvous, I communicated to Berthold the result of my observations, and as we had ascertained that you was unmolested, we came to the resolution of deferring our
purpose

purpose for some time, sending in the interim another messenger to Clagenfurth to hasten Theodore, as it was judged improper to make the main attempt without him, for the reasons already mentioned. I have omitted to mention, that through St. Eustace, who, notwithstanding the strict observance of Roberto's duty, found means to obtain a knowledge of whatever passed within the interior of the Castle, we were made acquainted with it almost as soon as it happened ; and as we had our spies constantly employed, the arrival of Albert and Martuccio in the neighbourhood was soon made known to us. It puzzled the generality of my comrades to account for the different manner in which they came ; but it was evident that their arrival was unknown to each other, and their intentions, whatsoever they might be, separate. The person of Albert was identified by a man who knew him, notwithstanding his disguise, and was in his company at the village, where he remained a few days. No one, however,

however, but myself knew that the other man, who had been discovered hovering around the Castle for some time, was Martuccio ; neither could it be ascertained that he had entered the Castle ; but the information that was given of the place where he was last seen, and his sudden disappearance, convinced me that he intended to make use of the secret passage, in order to gain admission into it without the knowledge of Albert, who, at the same time, was on the point of entering by the draw-bridge. This circumstance alone, independent of a prior knowledge of him, convinced me that he meditated an attempt of importance ; it immediately occurred to me, that before he could have time to acquaint Albert with the success of his commission, he had heard of his misfortunes, and had determined to take advantage of them ; besides, I was not ignorant of his sentiments respecting the fair sex ; and I doubted not but that the charms of the Princess of Clagenfurth had excited a passion.

sion in his breast, which he had resolved to gratify. I accordingly mentioned my suspicions to Berthold, which he allowed to be reasonable, although we could not conjecture how he would obtain the possession of your person, being ignorant of the communication, which I had in vain endeavoured to explore. Theodore was not arrived, but as I was convinced no time was to be lost, I prevailed upon Berthold to permit myself and Bernardo, whom I could depend upon, to enter the northern apartments, and endeavour to discover Martuccio, for we all agreed the danger from him was more urgent in respect to yourself, than from Albert; as the latter, though violent to an excess, was not devoid of the sentiments of honour; whereas, had success crowned the nefarious attempts of Martuccio, he might have had it in his power to have secreted his victim too securely, even for our exertions to have extricated you from his power.

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“In the mean time, while Bernardo and myself entered by the secret passage, the captain, with a few chosen men, was carefully to watch the inhabited part of the Castle : our success I need not repeat ; suffice it to observe, that I found all my suspicions verified, from having overheard the whole tenor of Martuccio’s discourse in the dungeon ; and it was with the greatest impatience that we awaited your approach. As soon, however, as we perceived that terror had made you fly from those who would have sacrificed their lives for your protection, we left the wretch to his fate, and hastily searched all the avenues ; the noise from above gave us some alarm, for as we were now convinced that Martuccio had known of some communication, we concluded that the same might be discovered by Albert, whose well-known voice I could discover, at intervals, directing the search. Yet, whatsoever might be our ultimate fate, we determined not to leave the dungeons,

geons, until it was clearly ascertained that you was no longer in them; being satisfied of this, we prepared for our departure.

“ The noise from above had gradually subsided, and eased us from all apprehensions of interruption from that quarter; and as we proceeded towards the entrance of the cavern, we observed, almost at the outside, part of a female dress; and as we were certain it was not there when we entered, we became assured that you had taken the right direction, and had escaped into the open country.

“ We were now considerably eased as to our fears for your safety, as we conjectured that you would meet with some of our associates, who, as they well knew the purport of our expedition, though not the manner in which it was to be conducted, would have taken you under their protection, and conducted you to a place of safety, where the utmost respect would have been paid; and I confess I feel some surprise at your having reached this cottage unobserved

unobserved by any of them. Upon our emerging from the dungeons, we met our chief, who had been anxiously awaiting our return; we immediately made him acquainted with the circumstances as they happened, and a most minute search was commenced, which would have ultimately proved successful, even if we had not met with our benevolent host: at first, both of us were so interested in our inquiries, that it was some time before we could understand each other; the mutual explanation gave great satisfaction to both parties; and finding that the object of our search was secure, we joined Ardolph in the pursuit of Theodore, as we were equally fearful with himself, that he would attempt some rash action, which would finally defeat our original plan. Fortunately we found him ere he had reached the drawbridge, where it had been his intention to challenge Albert with an open defiance; it was with some difficulty that we could restrain his rage, until the arrival of Berthold in one moment

moment accomplished what all our persuasions might have failed to effect. That extraordinary man, however, who seems born to command all others, had no sooner spoken to him apart from us, than his passion subsided, and he received the news of his sister's safety with expressions of joy, adequate to the pleasure which he felt. By his request, and at the command of my chief, I was ordered to accompany Ardolph back, while Theodore, although anxious to behold a much-loved sister, prepared for the execution of that duty which imperious circumstances demanded of him. I must now hasten to his assistance, as my presence is absolutely necessary; and the happy news I shall carry him, will, I know, afford both to Theodore and Berthold the most heartfelt satisfaction, as they both look up to the Count as to a being of superior order; nor shall I be surprised," continued Sebastian, looking at Ardolph in a peculiar manner, "if the latter was to pay a visit to the cottage to his long-lost Zulima."

Sebastian

Sebastian here concluded his narrative, and having spoken a few words to Ardolph in too low a key to be heard by either the Princess or Zulima, he made a respectful obeisance to them, and immediately left the amiable inhabitants of the cottage, happy that it had fallen to his lot to be of any service to beings so superior in their nature to those he had been accustomed to.

After the departure of Sebastian, the inhabitants of the cottage became more composed; yet both the Princess and Zulima observed that Ardolph was employed in a more active manner than he had been accustomed to, and that his menials were kept perpetually upon the alert. The answers also which he gave when they made any inquiry concerning these preparations, were vague and indecisive, yet they were delivered with such easy freedom, as banished all apprehension of danger. The mind of Zulima indeed was so totally occupied by the disclosure that had taken place, that every other subject became almost

most excluded, and her sanguine disposition prompted her to expect that she should soon be clasped in the arms of her surviving parent. The idea gave an animation to her countenance, which heightened her natural beauties, and rendered her more lovely than ever; neither could Adeline, while gazing on her perfections, help indulging a wish that such might be the partner of Rodolphus, should Fortune permit his restoration to his native honours. But although by the retreat of Albert one great impediment was removed, still a sigh would escape her, when she recollected the uncertainty of his existence; for of Berthold's declaration to the Count Von Werdenberg she was ignorant; neither did the words of the prophecy tend to relieve her mind from its anxiety; to her they appeared mysterious; for the same being that pronounced Theodore the avenger of her wrongs, had declared that the life of Albert should be clouded with misfortunes, until he restored the heir of Clagenfurth to his

just rights. In what manner this was to be accomplished, appeared incomprehensible; for the thought that even if living, Rodolphus should be in the power of Albert, almost destroyed that resolution of mind which she so strenuously endeavoured to maintain; besides, it was not sufficiently clear that the prophecy was to be accomplished; as the words, upon a more strict examination, implied conditions, which it rested with Albert alone to fulfil. These thoughts too frequently disturbed the peace of the Princess, and the sole consolation which she found was in the society of the amiable Zulima, whose innocent manners and engaging affability, daily increased her esteem for her.

One evening, the Princess and her adopted child retired to their apartments much earlier than usual, and had just taken leave of each other for the night, when a confused noise from below engaged their attention, and the latter, who felt much alarmed, returned with trembling steps to
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her friend. The Princess was still undressed, and appeared no less agitated than herself. They were fearful of descending, lest they should expose themselves to unnecessary danger ; yet the thoughts that the generous Ardolph might be a sufferer in her cause, terrified the Princess, who immediately conceived that her flight had been discovered by Albert, whose emissaries had successfully traced her, and were now come to restore her to his power : for a moment she became suspicious, that notwithstanding the plausibility of Sebastian's story, he was in the interest of Albert, and that it was through his means that her retreat was betrayed ; but that idea was discarded as soon as formed, when she recollected that Ardolph himself had conversed with both Sebastian and Theodore, in the presence of each other, and that it was by the express desire of the latter that Sebastian should accompany Ardolph to the cottage.

While the mind of the Princess was thus

busied in conjecture, the noise became louder, and the clash of arms was distinctly heard ascending towards the apartment where they had stood trembling for the event. It was in vain that Adeline requested her young friend to leave her to her fate, as she was convinced it was herself alone that was the object of their search; but with a mind superior to selfish fear, Zulima determined to remain with her.

During this amicable contest, the door of the apartment was burst open, and several men, whom, by their uniform, the Princess was too well assured belonged to Albert, rushed in; Zulima screamed and clung to the Princess, who, with a dignity that awed the most forward, waved her hand, as if forbidding their nearer approach. Struck with amazement, they instantly obeyed, and before they could recover from the awe which the dignified appearance of the Princess had occasioned, Roberto entered, and turning to his men, immediately

mediately commanded them to quit the apartment, and await his orders below.

No sooner did the Princess perceive the entrance of her former friend, than her fears were considerably abated; for although she was sensible that she was about to be restored to the power of Albert, yet she was satisfied that her treatment, as well as of her friend, would be as generous as the nature of Roberto's orders would admit; nor was she disappointed, for as soon as the soldiers who had accompanied him had withdrawn, he approached the Princess with the utmost respect, and requested her not to be unnecessarily alarmed, as he was strictly commanded, should he be fortunate enough to find her, to treat her in a manner due to the rank of the Princess of Clagenfurth. Reassured by the conduct of Roberto, the Princess, pointing to Zulima, who still kept weeping in her arms, inquired whether she was to be a partaker of her future destiny. Roberto, who had before observed her agitation, imme-

diately relieved their anxiety by saying, "Madame, I was ignorant that the cottage contained so much beauty, notwithstanding I have occasionally visited the noble Ardolph, whom I am proud to call friend; and it is with pleasure I can assure both yourself and your lovely companion, that she is perfect mistress of her own actions, and that her father has received no injury from the opposition which he thought himself bound by honour to give. He is now," continued he, addressing himself to Zulima, "under a temporary guard in his own apartment, until such time as the Princess departs from the cottage on her return to Mittewald Castle; yet, if it be any satisfaction to the Princess, even that shall be withdrawn, upon his giving me an assurance that I shall receive no further opposition from him; and believe me, it was with pain I felt myself called upon by imperious duty to act as I have done."

Adeline, who was well acquainted with the generous sentiments of Roberto, gave
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full credit to his assertions, and requested the release of his friend, which was immediately complied with; and in a few minutes Zulima found herself in the arms of the revered protector of her youth.

The minds of Roberto and Ardolph were cast in the same mould; both possessed unbounded generosity, at the same time as they were equally zealous in the performance of their duty to the commands of their superiors. They had long formed an intimacy, which had ripened into friendship; and although, from the strictness of orders imposed by Albert, Ardolph could not be admitted into the Castle, yet Roberto would sometimes pass several hours at the cottage, where he was received with the utmost cordiality; and it was, therefore, with real sorrow that he felt himself obliged to treat a man he so highly respected, in a manner apparently so hostile. Readily would he have made an apology for it, but Ardolph, with a smile, prevented him,

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saying,

saying, "The man who performs his duty to his chief must always be considered by me as a friend." He then introduced Zulima to Roberto as his adopted daughter, but without disclosing her real situation, observing, that hitherto he had, for powerful reasons, prevented her appearing, whenever strangers, or indeed friends, favoured him with their company at the cottage. But these being in some measure removed, he could no longer refrain from boasting of a treasure more acceptable than riches or honour.

Roberto paid those compliments necessary upon such an occasion; and the first agitation having in some degree subsided, the Princess requested to be informed by what means her escape from the Castle was discovered?

"It was Martuccio, Madame, that gave us the information," replied Roberto.

"Martuccio!" exclaimed the Princess; "I left him severely wounded, and engaged
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in a contest with a man whom he called Sebastian, in the dungeons beneath the northern apartments."

The countenance of Roberto immediately shewed that this intelligence was of the utmost importance, and that it was different from what he had before received, as he immediately said, "Madame, the assertion you have just made so completely astonishes me, that forgive me if I remark, that had it proceeded from any lips but those of the Princess of Clagenfurth, I should not have given credit to it; and pardon me if I ask, that I am to understand that you was in the dungeons beneath the northern apartments with Martuccio, and left him there engaged in a rencontre with a person he called Sebastian?"

"I am not surprised," replied the Princess, "at your disbelief, as the events which have lately happened to me are so astonishing, that I can scarcely credit my own senses; but if your time permits, I will convince you by a relation of the dangers I

have experienced since the moment when you parted from me in my own apartment at the Castle, to my being received at this hospitable mansion."

"Madame," rejoined Roberto, "however impatient I may be to inform my chief of my success, yet I feel so interested in the proposed recital, not only for my own but your sake, that I must entreat you to relate every particular; besides, it may be absolutely necessary I should be acquainted with it before our return to the Castle, as I suspect both Albert and myself have been again imposed upon by the specious tale of a villain; satisfied with my friend Ardolph's assurances, I will send back the principal part of my attendants to the Castle to notify our approach, and shall then impatiently await the promised narrative."

Roberto immediately gave the necessary orders, which he dispatched as soon as possible; and having returned to the apartment of Ardolph, the Princess, who, during his absence, had reflected that as her narrative
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extended only to her arrival at the cottage; it would not give any intelligence as to the designs either of Theodore or Sebastian; nor indeed was it necessary even to mention their names, except the latter, as related by Martuccio; she therefore determined to be as particular as possible, especially in every thing that appertained to the latter: she accordingly informed him of the manner of her escape, describing the secret entrance, together with the circumstances which have been already mentioned.

During the narrative, Roberto was peculiarly attentive; and on its conclusion, his countenance seemed to indicate unusual satisfaction. He thanked the Princess for having favoured him with an account so important, and congratulated her upon her escape from the artful designs of Martuccio, as also from Sebastian, whose business in the dungeons he supposed was connected with his former knowledge of them; adding, "Believe me, Madame, to find you safe, gives me the greatest pleasure, for the

anxiety I felt at the unaccountable manner of your disappearance was such as I never wish to experience again; neither was it alleviated by the account which that villain Martuccio gave, a far different one, believe me, than yours; his reign, however, will soon be over, as his deceptions can now no longer avail him; for on my return to the Castle, the first victim to the injured Princess of Clagenfurth shall be the artful minion of the deceived Albert."

"And justly will he suffer," cried Ardolph; "his life has been a series of crimes, and he has closed them all by the greatest, being a traitor to a benevolent master; and although I am sensible the natural compassion of the Princess would induce her, at any time, to plead for mercy, yet I trust, that in the present instance she will permit justice to take its course, as the removal of such a man as Martuccio from society is a benefit to it."

Adeline, although she shuddered at the shedding of blood, could not avoid acknowledging

ledging that he deserved his fate; "but may I," said she, "inquire by what means he escaped from the swords of Sebastian and his companion, as he seemed much wounded; or how he contrived to obtain an audience of Albert?"

Roberto bowed, and related the following circumstances:—

"Your unaccountable disappearance occasioned, as you may naturally suppose, the greatest alarm and astonishment; Albert became so furious as scarcely to be able to give orders sufficiently clear to be understood: all the apartments, however, were most narrowly examined, but no trace could be found by which you could have been taken away; for I was certain you had not gone of your own accord. The room in which I left you was so minutely examined, that it still remains a matter of surprise to me that we could not find the secret entrance you have mentioned; neither indeed has any communication been found to the uninhabited parts, except the
principal

principal entrance, which still remained secure. For Martuccio, with the most consummate art, has given an account of your escape, without implicating himself, or confessing his knowledge of the northern apartments; and indeed has laid it upon the very persons who, it appears, were the instruments of his disappointment. But I will not anticipate. As soon as we found our search within the walls was fruitless, scouts were employed all round the country, but with as little effect. Albert was inconsolable; and from the furious tyrant, became calm, pensive, and desponding. In vain I attempted, by every means I could suggest, to rouse his mind from the inactivity, he indulged; but he still continued the same, and I much fear the effect would have terminated fatally, had not a message I received aroused him from his insensibility. This was from Martuccio, who informed me that he was ill at a neighbouring monastery; but that, hearing Albert was arrived at Mittewald, he wished

wished to see me, as he had something of importance to relate, relative to the Princess of Clagenfurth. This information determined Albert to go himself to the monastery, whither he commanded me to accompany him. Upon our arrival there we were received by the father St. Eustace, who informed us that his patient was much better, and seemed extremely anxious to disclose some intelligence of the utmost importance to Albert. We were accordingly introduced to the cell where Martuccio lay, evidently better in health, but still unable to move, from the wounds which he received, as he made us believe, in your defence.

“When St. Eustace had retired, Martuccio first gave a long history of his adventures, from the time of his having executed the commands of his chief, all of which I am now certain were apocryphal; but he expatiated greatly on his sorrow for the intelligence which he had heard when he was upon his return to the city of Clagenfurth

furth with the account of his success; and upon his subsequent wanderings in search of his chief; when, after having brought down his artful tale to a late period, he said, that after the fatigue which he had undergone, without receiving the smallest intelligence of Albert, it struck him that it was not improbable but that he had sought the retreat of his mountain Castle; in consequence of this, he returned towards that place, in the anxious hope of finding his benefactor, whose misfortunes he pretended most feelingly to lament. ‘One evening,’ continued he, ‘the shades of night came on so imperceptibly, that I unexpectedly perceived I could not arrive at the Castle that evening in sufficient time to ensure accommodation. I had remarked, when on my former journey with the Princess of Clagenfurth, a retired cottage; which I knew was at no great distance, and I determined upon asking for shelter there; with some difficulty I reached it, and knocking at the door, requested admittance;

tance ; no answer was returned, but I fancied that I heard a female voice, and putting my ear close to the door, I became certain that it was the Princess of Clagenfurth."

Here the Princess looked both at Zulima and Ardolph in amazement.

Roberto, however, took no notice, but continued.

"Certain that it was the Princess," said Martuccio, "I again demanded admittance, threatening to force the door, if refused ; upon which it was opened by an elderly woman, who asked me the reason of my disturbing them at such an hour ; I replied that I was overtaken by the night, before I could reach the place of my destination ; I requested the rights of hospitality until the morning ; and was answered, that she was very sorry to refuse me, but that she had no better accommodations to offer than the fireside. Being determined to be convinced whether I had been deceived in my conjectures as to the Princess, I told her, that

that her offer was far more agreeable than wandering about the mountains in the dead of night ; and therefore I would readily accept of it. She appeared much confused, and seemed to hesitate for an answer : taking, however, her silence for consent, I sat down, and entered into a conversation respecting the Castle, in the hope of obtaining some intelligence. During a pause, I distinctly heard a noise in a room behind, as if of persons in earnest conversation ; one was evidently the voice of a female, and appeared to be that of supplication. I immediately demanded of the old woman who the persons were in the interior, and upon receiving no answer, I rushed forward, regardless of my own safety, and burst open the door : in an instant I found that I had not been mistaken, as I perceived the Princess of Clagenfurth in the power of a man whom I knew to have belonged to a formidable gang of banditti. She immediately requested my assistance to deliver her from a fate which she dreaded

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worse than death. Her appeal was too forcible to be withstood ; besides, I felt that I was performing my duty to my former chief. We were both well armed, and a furious engagement commenced, which I flatter myself would have ended favourable to our cause, had not an accomplice, hearing the scuffle, entered the apartment to the assistance of my opponent. Although farther resistance was almost needless, yet I determined not to yield but with my life ; but perceiving that the Princess had taken advantage of our engagement, and had escaped, I felt some satisfaction, although I lamented the dangers which she was still exposed to, and which I was no longer able to prevent. I had at last received so many wounds, that I sunk almost lifeless to the ground, and my assailants, noticing the absence of the Princess, left me weltering in my blood : for some time I remained in a state of insensibility, and when life resumed its functions, I found the old woman attending me with great solicitude : my first question

question was concerning the Princess ; and I was told that she had instantly left the cottage alone ; and that when the men who had brought her there heard she was gone, they became so furious, and uttered so many imprecations against the fortune that had snatched their prize from them, that she was fearful they would have done her some mischief ; but that after telling her to assist the wounded man, they left the house. As the accommodations were very indifferent, I requested to be removed here, which, with some difficulty, was accomplished ; yet the motion opened my wounds afresh, and ere I reached the monastery, the loss of blood had again produced a return of insensibility, from which I was, with some difficulty, recovered ; and it is to the great care of Father St. Eustace that I owe my present existence. [The first use I made of my reason was to give the intelligence to my chief, of whose arrival at the Castle I was informed by one of the monks, as well as of his grief for the loss of the Princess.

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How the bandit effected her release, I know not, or how he gained admittance into any part of the Castle ; but as I have heard that there are several communications between the northern apartments and the other parts of the Castle, I should suppose that during the former residence of their band there, he had obtained the knowledge of some of them, as well as the means of entering the uninhabited part of the Castle.'

"Such, Madame," concluded Roberto, "was the artful story told by Martuccio, by which he hoped, and indeed has succeeded in establishing himself in the confidence of the unsuspecting Albert ; however, my return shall unmask the villain, and shew the miscreant in his true light. It remains only to add, that our exertions to discover your retreat were renewed with greater energy, and has at last proved successful."

Roberto paused a few moments, when, in a tone that indicated the pain it gave him,

him, he asked, "When will the Princess of Clagenfurth be ready to accompany me to the Castle of Mittewald, where I am convinced Albert is awaiting with the utmost impatience to pay his respects to one whom he considers as the arbitress of his fate? and forgive me, Madame, if I add, that I am now convinced his sentiments towards you are founded upon a passion of the sincerest nature; neither will the Princess of Clagenfurth, whatever her final resolution may be, ever experience a dereliction from that respect due to her exalted rank."

Although the question asked by Roberto was naturally expected, yet the mention of it overwhelmed the family with the sincerest sorrow. The lovely Zulima hung upon the neck of the Princess, who in vain attempted to console her adopted child; while Ardolph, conscious that present resistance was unavailing, endeavoured by the most judicious arguments to recommend a patient resignation to that
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fate which was marked out for them ; hinting, in a manner intelligible only to themselves, that so sudden of late had been the reverses of fortune, as to warrant future hope.

It was with no small difficulty that Roberto could command his own feelings ; the Princess perceived the struggle, and animated by the consolatory advice of Ardolph, nobly resolved to put an end to the agonizing contest, by calling all her resolution to her aid, and expressing a willingness to accompany Roberto. " Let not my friends here," said she, " lament my departure ; remember that the same Providence which has hitherto protected me, still extends its watchful care ; and whether in the cottage of Ardolph, or in the Castle of Albert, its guardian power will still protect the virtuous. Farewell then," said she, rising ; then addressing Roberto, added, " I am ready to attend you."

The scene that ensued is much easier imagined than described. Zulima was car-

ried insensible to her chamber, where, even when by the assiduity of her attendants she recovered, she still remained for a long time inconsolable ; nor until Ardolph painted to her, in soothing but energetic language, the dangerous tendency of giving way to too great sensibility, could she be aroused from a state which must soon have proved prejudicial to her health.

In the mean time, every thing being prepared, the Princess took her final leave of Ardolph, who insisted upon attending her to the confines of his small domains, when he parted from her with a firmness that added considerably to her support, and encouraged a hope that her friends would still find means to accomplish her release ; for she well knew by the hints which he had thrown out, that he would immediately hasten with the intelligence of the past events to Theodore and Sebastian, as he had been entrusted with the place of their rendezvous.

As they proceeded towards the Castle,
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the Princess addressed Roberto with such composure as even surprised him, who was well acquainted with her magnanimity; and he began to entertain the hope that she might at last be persuaded to listen to the addresses of his chief, for whom, although he disapproved of many of his actions, he could not avoid feeling a great respect and regard. They soon came in sight of the drawbridge, which, upon the accustomed signal, was immediately lowered; and Roberto, together with the Princess, having entered the gates of the Castle, which were open to receive them, they were instantly closed.

The violence with which they were shut caused Roberto to turn round, when, to his surprise, he perceived that several additional guards were placed there; naturally supposing, however, that it was by the command of Albert, he made no inquiries, being anxious to introduce the Princess to his chief, who, he doubted not, was awaiting their appearance with the utmost impatience,

tience, as he supposed that he had received an account of his success from the men whom he dismissed at the cottage. Those who had accompanied him, as soon as they entered the gates, repaired to their usual stations ; but as Roberto advanced, he felt rather astonished that neither Madalen or Agnes came forward to receive the Princess, as the signal made was well known to them as announcing their arrival ; nor were any of the menials in attendance. So unusual a circumstance, together with the stillness that reigned throughout the Castle, alarmed him, and caused him to feel an anxiety which he could ill disguise. The Princess was not less agitated, although from a different cause ; a latent hope that she should still escape from the power of Albert, had supported her through her last severe trial ; the present appearances seemed favourable, and she impatiently awaited the *denouement* of th's unexpected scene. A few minutes explained the whole : Roberto still advanced towards the great hall, the doors of which

which he found shut ; yet he fancied that he heard a confused sound from within : upon opening them, he started back in the utmost terror, and would have retreated, but immediately found himself secured by two men, who had been purposely stationed at each side of the entrance, while the Princess, before she could recover herself from her surprise, found herself in the arms of her beloved brother, Theodore de Mountfort.

When the joy and astonishment at this happy reverse of fortune had a little subsided, Theodore introduced Berthold and Sebastian, to the latter of whom he principally attributed his success without bloodshed, "which I well know," said he, addressing the Princess, "will enhance the merit of the action in your eyes."

Adeline received the compliments paid her with that complacency which was the constant attendant upon her actions ; and she gave to Sebastian those praises which were justly his due. Upon the introduc-

tion of Berthold, she felt a sensation for which she was unable to account; his features seemed familiar to her, and she fancied he resembled a person for whom she had formerly entertained the highest esteem; but the idea was confused, and she hesitated in what manner to address him; Berthold perceived the scrutinizing look with which she had examined him, and with a smile said, "Can the captain of banditti have the honour of being the subject of the Princess of Clangenfurth's attention?"

"The captain of banditti!" repeated Adeline; "impossible!"

"It is true, nevertheless, my dear sister," said Theodore; "and here," said he, taking Sebastian by the hand, "is his lieutenant, two friends that, except the Count Von Werdenberg, I prize more than the rest of the world. Be not surprised, Adeline, at the warmth of my expressions; there is a mystery attendant upon Berthold, known only to the venerable Count; and in his presence

sence only is it to be divulged; in the mean time, rest satisfied that whomsoever he honours with his friendship must deserve it."

"You mistook my emotion, my dear Theodore," replied the Princess; "for, believe me, I entertained no thought prejudicial to your respected friend, to whom I am sensible I am greatly indebted; but I own I can scarcely reconcile myself to the fact, although averred by himself."

"The presence of the Count Von Werdenberg, Madame," rejoined Berthold, "will solve all mystery; but I am bound by the most sacred ties not to disclose particular circumstances without his permission, which I flatter myself we shall soon obtain; as Sebastian is going to request his presence here, which is become necessary to regulate our future proceedings; and rejoiced am I to hear that the words of the sibyl are fulfilled, and that a happiness he had long lost sight of is now about to be restored to him."

"Have you," asked the Princess, "informed him of the discovery of his daughter?"

"No, Madame," replied Berthold, "we reserve that pleasure until his arrival."

During this interesting conversation, the Princess had been so attentive as to forget that Roberto was detained a prisoner in the hall, until the voice of Theodore, commanding him to be conveyed to a place of safety, roused her recollection. She immediately requested her brother to countermand his order, giving him at the same time so flattering an account of his generous conduct towards her, as entirely gained the good-will of that young hero, who, advancing towards him with a look expressive of gratitude, immediately ordered him to be released, saying, "To a man of your principles I need not make conditions; you are free."

Roberto, most sensibly affected at this generosity, would have fallen at the feet of Theodore, but he prevented him, observing,

ving, "That when he could, consistently with his vowed allegiance to his chief, offer it him, he should be happy in accepting his friendship."

"May I," asked Roberto, with some hesitation, "demand his fate?"

"He is safe and unhurt," replied Theodore; "at present he is under a guard, where he must remain until the arrival of the Count Von Werdenberg; in the meantime, I will anticipate your wishes; tomorrow you shall have access to him."

Roberto attempted to express his thanks, but could not find utterance; and he retired deeply impressed with the noble and heroic conduct of the young De Mountfort, to whom he mentally resolved, at some future period, to attach himself. Before, however, he left the apartment, the Princess requested that Madalen and Agnes might attend her, a request most readily complied with.

The Princess finding herself fatigued with the occurrences of the day, soon re-

tired to the apartment which she had before occupied, which had been previously prepared for her; but before she quitted the hall, she desired that Bernardo might be sent to the cottage of Ardolph, and acquaint him with the happy reverse of fortune she had experienced; and at the same time he was instructed to use every inducement to prevail upon Ardolph and Zulima to pay a visit to the Castle. "To the latter, the expectation of embracing an unknown father will be sufficient; and for Ardolph, tell him," said the Princess, smiling, "it is my command."

Joy is frequently as great a disturber of rest as sorrow; the mind, when overcharged by either passion, loses that equilibrium which regulates its usual motions, and like a vessel that has lost its rudder in a storm, is tost to and fro at the mercy of the winds and waves, baffling all the skill of the most experienced helmsman. The truth of this observation was fully experienced by the Princess of Clagenfurth, who in vain courted
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the smiles of Morpheus. Long did the drowsy deity resist her blandishments, and morning dawned ere her eyes were steeped with the refreshing dew of the Lethean poppy. It was indeed so late when she awoke, that both Madaïen and Agnes had been for some time in attendance ; but perceiving her composed, would not disturb her. When she arose, she found herself much refreshed, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour when she closed her eyes ; and the pleasing dreams that flitted in her imagination, during her repose, had infused a cheerfulness into her mind which gave her affectionate attendants the greatest pleasure to observe. Her first inquiry was after Roberto, and she felt a happiness in hearing that he was treated by every one in the Castle with as much respect as when he was invested with the chief command.

“ Ah ! Madame,” said Agnes, “ we are sensible that it is to you we are indebted for the kindness with which we are treated by the present masters of the Castle ; indeed, at

the moment they entered, Sebastian, who was the first person we saw, assured us that we had nothing to fear, being the friends of the Princess of Clagenfurth. To be sure, it rather surprised us to find him acquainted with the occurrences that had passed at the Castle, but we had no time to make any inquiry, as he desired we would permit him to convey us to a place of safety, until the confusion had subsided; and it was this precaution, Madame, that prevented our attendance earlier."

The Princess expressed her thanks to them in the most affectionate terms, assuring them that she should never forget the kindness which she had experienced both from them and Roberto; "and I trust," added she, "that it will soon be in my power to pay the debt of gratitude; in the mean time, depend upon every accommodation that is in my power to procure, both for yourselves and Roberto."

A message being sent that Theodore and Berthold were awaiting her appearance in
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the hall, Adeline dismissed her two friends, and immediately joined them.

When the morning repast was concluded, Theodore, addressing his sister, said, "I make no doubt, my dear Adeline, but that you are anxious to know the means by which so sudden a change has been made in our fortunes; and as Berthold and Sebastian have been not only the principal contrivers of, but actors in the scene, I must beg to refer you to the former, as Sebastian is absent, for the particulars."

The Princess looked at Berthold, who, without waiting to be asked, replied to the suggestion of Theodore, "It will give me great pleasure to obey your wishes, particularly as I am sensible that your modesty would prevent your taking the proper notice of your own actions. You, Madame," continued Berthold, with energy, "may henceforward be proud of a brother who, notwithstanding accumulated injuries, can in the very moment of successful vengeance,

geance, ameliorate the valour of a hero by the pity and compassion of a christian."

This expressive compliment affected the Princess in so powerful a manner as to bring tears into her eyes, as it recalled past scenes to her memory, which too faithfully contrasted the conduct of Theodore de Mountfort and the fallen Albert; but she soon regained her composure; and her friends, aware of the source of this momentary agitation, prudently forbore to make any comments upon it; and every trace was soon obliterated by the interesting relation that Berthold gave of the transactions which had taken place.

"It is unnecessary," said Berthold, addressing the Princess, "to acquaint you with any circumstances previous to the time when Ardolph, in the pursuit of Theodore, at your request, joined us, as you have doubtless been already informed of the most material part of them, either by that generous man, or by Sebastian; I shall

shall therefore confine myself to such as have occurred since the latter rejoined us. I must not, however, omit expressing the very great satisfaction we experienced, upon hearing from Ardolph that you had found your way from the subterraneous dungeons, and was safe under his hospitable roof. Yet, happy as we felt ourselves, the joy of Theodore felt an alloy, when he heard that he had accidentally been under the same roof with you without knowing it, and his chagrin almost made him unjust towards our mutual benefactor. But the candour and conclusive arguments of your protector soon reconciled him to the disappointment; although he deeply regretted the delay which must necessarily take place before he could embrace a sister, from whom he had been so long separated. He even insisted at first upon returning with Ardolph to the cottage, but being reminded of the injunctions of his revered friend, the Count Von Werdenberg, he resisted the allurement, and nobly resolved

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to persevere in the performance of those duties which he deemed imposed upon him by a superior power.

“ During the absence of Sebastian with Ardolph, we had formed a plan, which, though hazardous, we had little doubt would have been finally successful; but the important intelligence which he obtained by the narrative you related, made us, on his return, relinquish it entirely. The discovery of Zulima was a subject of sincere rejoicing, for while we anticipated with delight the happiness that awaited the declining years of our mutual friend, the Count Von Werdenberg, we enjoyed a well-grounded hope of success in the cause we were engaged in, as it seemed a confirmation of the superior power of the sibyl. The greatest part of her prophecies had already been verified; and this additional proof of course encouraged us in our proceedings, and inspired our minds with greater energy.

“ Caution was, however, still necessary,
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as we were well acquainted with the temper and disposition of our opponent; the intelligence therefore brought by Sebastian was canvassed with the greatest deliberation, and many were the plans suggested both by Theodore and myself; for Sebastian, although present, thought it his duty not to interfere, unless called upon; however, all of them were defective in some point or other, so that we found a difficulty in agreeing which to adopt. During our conversation, I had observed that Sebastian appeared deep in thought; indeed, his ideas seemed entirely abstracted from the passing scene, and concentrated only in himself. As I well knew that he possessed great acuteness, although I confess I was little aware of the extent of his talents, either in the forming or executing a plan, I asked him if he could point out any method by which the difficulties that embarrassed us might be overcome? With great diffidence he answered that he had been forming a train of operations, the

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which he could almost venture to assert would ensure us the most complete success, without hazard, or, he hoped, bloodshed. Happy to avail ourselves of such an offer, though in great doubt of its effect, we desired him to give a detail of his plan, promising that if it appeared at all feasible, that it should be adopted; and that we would leave the execution of it to him, making him our commander for the time. He seemed quite confounded at first at the trust reposed in him, and even thought us in joke, until I seriously assured him to the contrary : as it was rather complicated, he could give us but a slight sketch ; yet we easily perceived it might be brought to perfection ; and the result has proved the truth of our conjectures. In relating the particulars, however, you must prepare to hear some manœuvres that will surprise you, and which you had little idea of at the time they were put into practice."

"It is of little moment," said the Princess, "what they were, since they answered:

so good an end ; however, proceed, for I am impatient to hear the whole process, especially since you have excited a fresh portion of curiosity."

Berthold bowed, and proceeded.

" As soon as it was determined to follow his directions, he desired me to collect our associates together by a certain day, with orders that each of them should bring with him a sufficient supply of necessaries to last several days, so that they might not be discovered to be in the neighbourhood, by being obliged to go out to procure provisions ; 'and by the time,' said he, ' they are assembled, I shall be fully prepared for action :' he then told us that he must be absent a short time, but should return the day preceding the period appointed for our associates to meet ; 'in the mean time, let me entreat (command, said he, with a smile, I dare not,) that no one will risk a premature discovery, by going near the Castle, or associating with the neighbouring peasantry.' After he had received our promise,

mise, he left us, but returned punctual to his word. His countenance immediately shewed that he had met with the success he wished; and as he entered the apartment in which Theodore and myself were sitting, he exclaimed—‘The tyrant is now taken in his own toils, and the very means by which he vainly fancies to secure his happiness, shall prove his defeat.’ He seemed so overjoyed, that it was with difficulty we could understand him, until at length he gave us the following detail of his intended plan, as finally arranged by him.

‘You may recollect, captain,’ said he, addressing himself to me, ‘that I mentioned to you that Martuccio was left in the dungeons by Bernardo and myself, so severely wounded, that I doubted much whether he would be able to reach the monastery, as he muttered was his intention; but as I thought he might possibly have effected it, I determined, when I last left you, to see, not doubting but that if he was alive, I could, either by threats or promises, make him.

him discover to me the secret entrance from the northern to the inhabited part of the Castle, by which he conveyed away the Princess of Clagenfurth. I well knew that I should find an able and willing assistant in the Father St. Eustace, whom you may remember had before befriended me, and who knows him as well as I do.'

"Here," said Berthold, "Sebastian smiled, and I immediately suspected what indeed I found to be the truth, that St. Eustace was the other surviving partner of that association who had been so many years ago obliged to quit the northern wing of Mit-tewald Castle. After this little interruption he continued—

'As I did not wish that Martuccio should know I was in the monastery, until I had seen my friend St. Eustace, I sent for the latter to the porter's lodge, under a fictitious name, and as he thought it might be some person who wanted his spiritual assistance, he came immediately. His surprise had nearly betrayed me, and as I feared that he
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might call me by my name, I made a private signal, formerly well understood by us, of secrecy. A monk's apparel lay in the lodge, which I put on, and was then introduced as a travelling friar. St. Eustace took me immediately to his own cell, which was adjoining to that in which Martuccio had been placed, in order to be near the father, who attended him in a medical capacity. A contrivance had been made, for some purpose or other, between these two cells, by which, unseen ourselves, we could observe whatever passed in the other; this I thought a fortunate circumstance, as I might possibly have occasion to make use of it, and so it proved. As caution, however, was necessary, we conversed in so low a tone as to prevent us from being heard by others; and I immediately told St. Eustace my wishes, and by flattering his vanity, and making some promises for his future advancement, which I well knew that either the Count Von Werdenberg or Theodore de Mountfort would readily

dily fulfil, I completely gained him to our interest, and he promised to obtain the secret the next day at confession ; “ but,” said he, “ I believe there is something going on between Albert and Martuccio, as the latter sent this morning a message to the Castle.” This intelligence was, I considered, of importance, and I wished much to obtain a knowledge of the purport. While we were consulting together as to the manner in which this could be effected, we heard the door of Martuccio’s cell open, and several people seemed to enter ; St. Eustace and myself were surprised, as he knew that he was still in a weak state, and very unfit to undergo much fatigue. Anxious to know the result of this meeting, I went to the place before mentioned, and to my great surprise, I perceived Albert and another person, whom I recognized to be Roberto, having seen him upon my former expedition to the Castle. I dared not stir, or scarcely breathe, but contrived to make a sign for silence to St. Eustace.”

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As in Roberto's narrative to the Princess of Clagenfurth we have related the account given by Martuccio to Albert, we shall proceed to the consequences arising from its being overheard by Sebastian.

‘I found,’ said he, ‘that although the escape of the Princess was known, yet that the place of her retreat was still a secret; but I have no doubt but that the search will be renewed with the greatest vigour; and upon this,’ continued he, ‘I have formed a plan, which I am confident will succeed. I must, however, first mention, that after Albert’s departure, St. Eustace contrived to obtain the wished-for knowledge, which I have made myself so perfect in, that no difficulty can occur; and the Castle will soon be our own, notwithstanding there is a more numerous garrison than I had before reason to suppose; but you know, captain,’ continued he, with a smile, ‘*divide et supero*, divide and conquer, is the old motto, and is the basis of my plan, which I flatter myself, when it is seriously considered,

considered, you will approve. It is this—Albert will, no doubt, send out his emissaries in various directions ; this, besides being inconvenient, and indeed hazardous to us, as some of them may discover the assembling of our troop, will not materially weaken the garrison, as these emissaries will chiefly consist of those who do not bear arms. It is my intention, therefore, to convey to him, by the means of St. Eustace, the intelligence where the Princess is ; and as Albert is aware of the strength of Ardolph's household, he will undoubtedly send a strong force to effect his purpose ; but to prevent any serious resistance, ^{it} is my intention to make Ardolph acquainted with my design, and prepare him to make only a feigned opposition : in the mean time, as soon as the troops have left the Castle, and are nearly arrived at the cottage, of which we can easily obtain the intelligence, I will conduct our brave associates through the secret cavern, to an easy, and from their being unprepared for such

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an event, I trust, bloodless contest; be that as it may, once entered, the fates have committed the rest to the sword of Theodore de Mountfort.'

"Such, Madame, was Sebastian's plan, and although at first it was slightly opposed by Theodore upon your account, yet, when he reflected upon the resolution you naturally possessed, he gave it his cordial approbation, sensible that when explained, you would rather esteem the motive, from which you experienced a temporary uneasiness, than blame it. The result has been as fortunate as we could expect, and proves both the wisdom with which the scheme was planned, and the masterly manner in which it was executed."

Berthold ceased, and the Princess returned him thanks for the trouble which she had given. "I can now," said she, "account for a circumstance that at the time puzzled me extremely, which was the composure of Ardolph, and the little resistance made both by himself and his retinue,

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nue, as from the preparations which had been made for some days previous to the arrival of Roberto, I judged, although I carefully concealed my suspicions from Zulima, that he expected to be attacked. Believe me, however, that you justly appreciated my sentiments; for the temporary dread which I experienced at being again in the power of Albert, has been amply compensated by the conviction that it was necessary, in order to produce a conquest, achieved with so little bloodshed; and I acknowledge the prudence that concealed the intended measures from me; for I fear that if the truth had been entrusted to me, the tears and agony of Zulima might have tempted me to have given some hint that would have roused the suspicion of Roberto, who might have found means, if not to have assisted his chief, to have prevented your reaping the advantage proposed, by removing me to some distant quarter. But although the issue has been fortunate, yet, if I may judge from the compliment you

passed upon Theodore, the rencontre could not have been of so trifling a nature as to pass unnoticed."

Theodore rose, and saying he should pay a visit to their prisoner, left the room.

Berthold smiled, and again addressing the Princess, observed, that true heroism was ever accompanied with modesty, and that it always gave the gallant Theodore pain to listen to the recapitulation of those praises which were so justly his due ; for that when he could not escape from it, he always endeavoured to put an end to the conversation.

" His absence, however," said the Princess, " offers a good opportunity, and you will much oblige me by minutely relating the particulars."

Berthold bowed, and began—

" Conducted by Sebastian, with the utmost silence, through the secret passage, the entrance of which we left guarded, we proceeded to the spot where Martuccio had described the communication from the northern to the inhabited part of the Castle
to

to exist, and which he said opened into one of the apartments which had been assigned to you. On our arrival at the place, notwithstanding that Sebastian was most minutely correct in his description of it, and that it answered completely in every point, yet so artfully was it constructed, that it was a considerable time before we discovered it; but once found, no further difficulty occurred; the concealed spring readily answered to the pressure, and we found ourselves in the inhabited part of the Castle. Upon a careful examination, our surprise that your escape was not traced ceased, as the communication could only be opened from the northern side; and so correct was the workmanship, that not the smallest vestige of such a contrivance was discernible from your apartment. We were in some fear that the delay we had experienced might have proved detrimental to us; all, however, remained still and quiet, and it was evident that the inhabitants were totally unsuspecting of our de-

sign. The two principal objects were to secure those troops which composed the garrison, and the person of Albert. In order to effect this with as little disturbance as possible, Sebastian, who had previously made himself master of their place of rendezvous, put himself at the head of the principal part of our force, while Theodore and myself went in search of Albert. A very short period convinced us that Sebastian had fallen in with the objects of his search ; and as the clamour soon ceased, we conceived that his success had not been attended with any material difficulty. We were right in our conjectures, as his opponents were taken quite unprepared, not even having their arms with them.

“ The noise, however, naturally made upon such an occasion, reached the ears of Albert, who was awaiting, in anxious suspense, the return of Roberto ; surprised at a tumult so unusual, he was hastening towards the ramparts, when, turning a sharp angle, he encountered Theodore and myself.

self. Astonished, he started back, gazing as if he had seen a phantom ; but the voice of the former calling to him to defend himself, roused him from the stupor which seemed to have arrested his faculties. His eyes glowed with the emotions of rage that agitated his soul ; and he uttered the most dreadful execrations upon Roberto, whom, in the first heat of passion, he fancied had betrayed him.

“ The noble mind of Theodore revolted at the accusation of the innocent, and dropping the point of his sword, he, in a few words, explained to him the predicament in which he was, and the plan which had been so successfully executed against him ; adding, ‘ yet, although my power is here unlimited, and those to whom you looked for a defence are my prisoners, think not, Albert, that I will meanly take the advantage of numbers. The wrongs of the Princess of Clagenfurth cry for vengeance, and demand a brother’s sword to redress them. To me alone is the revenge of her injuries

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committed.

committed. Once thou hast fled from my sword; yet, if thy crimes have not entirely obliterated thy former valour, attend me singly to the ramparts; my honour is thy guard.'

"The Prince returned no answer, but followed in a gloomy silence: upon his reaching the ramparts, he started as he beheld Sebastian with his brave associates, who had conducted the garrison thither, and was upon the point of sending to seek us, as we made our appearance. Theodore perceived the emotion of Albert, and attributing it to a suspicion that he might take advantage of numbers, he addressed me, saying, 'Berthold, (at that instant I perceived a more than common agitation in the countenance of Albert, who seemed to view me with peculiar interest; but although I guessed the cause, I took no notice, but appeared attentive to Theodore, who said) from you I demand one promise.'

'Name it,' I replied, 'and it shall be obeyed, as I am sensible that Theodore de Mountfort

Mountfort can request nothing that honour may not be proud to grant.'

'It is,' said he, 'that during my contest with Albert, whatever my danger may be, that you will not interfere, either yourself, or permit any of your brave associates; and should Fortune desert me, and give the day to my opponent, let both his life and liberty be sacred; but on such conditions that may ensure the future repose of the Princess of Clagenfurth.'

"My heart was too full to express my admiration of his noble conduct, but I bowed obedience; and at the instant, the whole troop, as if animated by the impulse, followed my example.

"During this appeal, Albert still kept silence; a sullen gloom had succeeded to that fire which glowed in his countenance when he first encountered us, and he looked the image of despair. The attack of Theodore, however, which immediately commenced, aroused him, and the hero was once more apparent. The contest was soon

concluded. Theodore, cool, yet determined, watched every motion of his adversary, whose blows, directed with fury, were easily parried; until at last, by a skilful and fortunate manœuvre, he became master of his adversary's sword. For a few moments, I confess my fears led me to be unjust to my brave friend. The life of Albert was at his mercy, and I fancied that I could perceive in the look of Theodore a determined revenge. I trembled, not so much for the life of Albert, whose former treatment of the Prince of Clagenfurth would, in the opinion of many, have warranted the most severe retaliation, but for the honour of my friend: my suspense was, however, soon relieved, for, the conqueror advancing, said, 'Albert, your life is in my power: but I am sensible that I should ill deserve the thanks of the Princess of Clagenfurth, by imbruing my hands in the blood of the unfortunate. My regard for her feelings, and for my own honour, forbids such an idea; the words of the prophetic
sybil

sybil are accomplished; and by the humiliation of Albert, the honour of Theodore de Mountfort is satisfied, and his vengeance appeased. Disdain not then to receive your life from my hands, though, for a few days, you must remain an honorary prisoner, until the arrival of Henry Count Von Werdenberg.'

'Henry Count Von Werdenberg!' exclaimed Albert, in amaze, and breaking silence for the first time; 'does he live?'

'Yes,' replied Theodore; 'his story is long and interesting; at some future time——'

'It is enough,' said Albert, hastily interrupting Theodore; 'I would retire.'

'Without making any comment on a conduct which seemed mysterious, his wishes were immediately complied with; and Theodore gave express orders that he should be treated with all the respect due to his rank; neither were his followers forgotten, who were so charmed with the noble generosity of their conqueror, that

they unanimously swore to obey him, as their chief. This being settled, we planned the reception of Roberto, whose return was most anxiously expected by us, while we fondly anticipated the joy you would experience at so unexpected a reverse."

Scarcely had Berthold concluded his interesting narrative, when the signal for lowering the drawbridge was heard, and ere they could make the inquiry, Ardolph entered, leading his adopted child, who no sooner perceived the Princess, than, heedless of observation, and actuated solely by the genuine feelings of her heart, she flew into her arms, which were open to receive her. Her heart was too full for utterance; tears trickled down her lovely cheeks; but they were the tears of joy and happiness. The generous Ardolph beheld the scene with real satisfaction, as he perceived that the friendship which the Princess entertained for his beloved charge was fixed upon a firm and solid foundation. Their mutual feelings, however, were relieved by
his

his approach to congratulate the Princess upon this happy change: she received him with an affability that charmed him, saying, with a smile, "I must consult my adopted daughter as to the nature of the punishment we ought to inflict, for the deception you was guilty of towards us."

"To a sentence pronounced by such judges," replied Ardolph, "I must submit with patience and resignation."

"Yet, if I may judge from the austerity of their countenances," said Berthold, "it is not likely to prove a severe one."

"Nay," replied Adeline, "both Theodore and yourself are implicated, and must come in for your share."

While they were indulging themselves in this innocent raillery, Theodore, who had paid his visit to Albert, re-entered the apartment; the backs of the Princess and Zulima, who were engaged in such earnest conversation as not to perceive his approach, were towards him; but Ardolph immediately hastened to congratulate him

upon the final success of his plan. The reply of Theodore caused Adeline and her young friend to turn round, and for the first time he beheld the lovely Zulima, whom the Princess introduced as the newly-discovered daughter of Henry Count Von Werdenberg. The eyes of Theodore were fixed so intently upon her, as to excite the rosy blush, which he no sooner perceived, than, with the utmost grace, he apologized for his unintentional rudeness, "which," added he, "I trust the lovely Zulima will excuse, when I confess that my admiration was most powerfully excited by the marked resemblance of her, both to her mother, as well as another beloved object."

"Knew you my mother?" exclaimed Zulima, with the most lively emotion, that shewed the interest she had in his answer.

"Alas!" replied Theodore, "I had not that happiness; as long before my good fortune conducted me to the sequestered retreat of the Count Von Werdenberg, she had joined her kindred angels; but having
been

been accustomed to gaze upon her resemblance, erected in marble over her consecrated tomb, the features have made so indelible an impression upon my memory, as can never be effaced."

Zulima was going to put some further questions to Theodore, but the Princess, who had particularly remarked the conclusion of Theodore's first address, prevented her, by asking who the object of his adoration was, that he ventured to place in competition with the beauties of her young friend?

"One, my dear sister, who, at first sight, engaged my affections; and a more intimate acquaintance with the beauties of her mind, which, if possible, surpass those of her person, have established them upon so firm a foundation as time cannot eradicate; and as I possess the approbation of her guardian, the Count Von Werdenberg, the restoration of my sister to her just rights is alone wanting to complete my happiness,

as Matilda has made that event the period of her cruelty."

"Matilda!" repeated Adeline in surprise; "can it be?"

"Yes," interrupted Theodore, "it is as you suspected; my adored Matilda is the newly-discovered daughter of the late Prince of Clagenfurth, by his first wife, the sister of the Chevalier D'Armfeldt."

"When will the mysterious wonders that surround us cease!" exclaimed the Princess; "every hour discloses some new event: it is true that the Abbess of St. Veil acquainted me with the existence of Matilda, and the prior marriage of the Prince of Clagenfurth to a lady, who was reported to be of a noble family, but reduced by misfortunes; her name I never knew; however, I can now account for the conduct of the Chevalier D'Armfeldt when I last saw him, for he then hinted that circumstances, before unknown to him, had rendered my welfare no longer indifferent to him.

him. Had I at that time placed greater confidence in him, as he seemed to court it, I should probably have escaped many of those dangers which I have since encountered ; but considering him as the firm friend of my persecutor, I treated his advances with the distrust I thought they merited. I had, however, planned that Matilda should be placed under my own protection, at the time when, by the art of Martuccio, I was decoyed from the convent of St. Veil ; and believe me, my dear Theodore, that I feel the sincerest satisfaction that so lovely a tie exists, which will more closely cement the house of Clagenfurth to those of De Mountfort and Werdenberg. Although," continued Adeline, looking at Theodore in a manner not to be misunderstood by him, "I confess that in my own mind I had formed a plan to the same effect, though in another manner ; and it is a source of additional satisfaction to me to have discovered your prior engagement in time."

Theodore

Theodore well understood the meaning of his sister, and his heart confessed, that had he never seen his adored Matilda, Zulima would soon have become the master of it.

“How happy I shall be,” said Zulima, addressing the Princess, “to be introduced to a person who must be amiable, as she has already engaged the affections of those I am most bound to love, and particularly as, from the conversation I have just heard, Matilda seems to have experienced a fate similar to my own ; indeed, I shall be sincerely rejoiced should she accompany my father here.”

The eyes of Theodore glistened with pleasure at this artless wish ; his emotion was not unobserved by Adeline, who sportively said, “There is one in the room at least that thanks you for that idea, at least if the eyes speak truth.”

“True, my dear sister,” said Theodore ; “that indeed would complete my happiness.”

“Ah ! Theodore,” rejoined Adeline,
encompassed

encompassed as I am with those I hold most dear, and extricated from a danger which threatened my future life, I ought not to murmur; but still, while uncertain of the fate of Rodolphus, I feel a vacuum in my heart, that neither my own, or the happiness of my friends, can entirely close."

Berthold looked at Theodore, who understood his meaning, as he recollected his former assertion respecting the existence of Rodolphus, to himself and the Count Werdenberg at Clagenfurth; and advancing towards the Princess, observed, that the restoration of the legal heir to the principality of Clagenfurth was the only part of the prophecy uttered by the sibyl of the forest left unfulfilled: "Surely then," added he, "there is every reason to hope that this also will be brought to perfection."

"Fain would my heart give way to the delightful expectation," rejoined the Princess; "but alas! my fears that the prophecy may already be in part accomplished, lessen

lessen even the small hopes which I have hitherto ventured to entertain."

"My dear Adeline, why give way to such despondency? How is it possible that the prophecy can be completed?"

"Love, Theodore," said the Princess, endeavouring to rally her spirits, "has, I see, destroyed your recollection! Do you not perceive, that should my fears be realized, and Rodolphus be removed to a better world, that your betrothed Matilda becomes the heiress of Clagenfurth?"

Theodore felt a momentary confusion, but soon recovering himself, said, "Believe me, my sister, when I assure you that the idea has never once entered my head, having considered Matilda in no other light than as the adopted daughter of the Count Von Werdenberg; and notwithstanding I was made acquainted with her real situation and rank in life, I forgot the latter, being well contented to receive her hand solely in the character she was first introduced

introduced to me ; and indeed the impression that has constantly been engraved on my mind of the existence of Rodolphus, prevented, in all probability, my thinking of the claims of Matilda, an impression indeed which has lately been more strongly confirmed by Berthold."

The Princess looked at Berthold, as if endeavouring to pierce the inmost recesses of his heart ; and encouraged by the placidity which she fancied was portrayed in his countenance, she exclaimed, " Oh ! keep me no longer in suspense ; if you know any thing of my Rodolphus, ease the anxiety of a mother, who confesses that on this subject she dares not claim the character of a heroine ; but no," said she, (as if struck by some sudden recollection) " perhaps his enemies have still the power to molest him : oh ! let not my weakness betray him, and in one moment defeat the care of so many years."

" Compose yourself, Madame," replied Berthold, " nor let that resolution, so conspicuous

cuous in the Princess of Clagenfurth, give way, when she hears that Rodolphus lives."

"Lives!" repeated Adeline, sinking upon her knees, and lifting her hands to Heaven; "lives! oh! repeat it once more, and bless me with the sound. But where, where is my long-lost boy? oh! let me hasten to his embrace, and press the living image of my adored Clagenfurth to these widowed arms."—Adeline started up from her humble posture, and was hurrying towards the door, when Theodore and Zulima, who expected that the disclosure might at first overpower her natural firmness, gently detained her, and without any resistance led her back to her seat; for a few moments her senses seemed confused, and she gazed around the room, as if ignorant both of the place and of the persons who were with her; a flood of tears, however, soon restored her faculties; they were suffered to flow unrestrained for some time, when, finding herself recovered, she said, "Pardon, my friends, a weakness I could not controul;

controul; to hear it confidently asserted by one who has proved himself so great a friend to my family, and who I cannot suspect would deceive in so delicate and momentous a point, that my long-lost child was in existence, was, after so many years uncertainty, more than I could sustain. May I," said she, looking anxiously at Berthold, "inquire, with safety to himself, where Rodolphus is?"

"Readily, Madame, would I oblige you," replied Berthold, "as I trust that all danger is over; but a most solemn oath at present restrains me from gratifying your anxious wish; a few days, and every restriction will be removed; but let me once more assure you that he is in safety, and under my protection."

"Yours!" exclaimed both Adeline and Theodore; while the latter added, "this indeed is another discovery which I little expected, and adds to the mystery in which we are all involved."

"A little patience, my dear friend,"

said Berthold, "and all will be explained, when the captain of the banditti will be seen in his true colours."

"There is none," said the Princess, "which he can appear in, but what I am convinced, from the little experience I have had, will redound to his honour."

Berthold bowed, and the conversation took a general turn, though it chiefly respected the arrival of the Count Werdenberg, which was most anxiously awaited by all parties. It was, however, interrupted by one of the associates of Berthold, who requested to speak with him immediately in private. He accordingly left the apartment with him: the message was delivered in so earnest a manner as gave some alarm; and as the fear of ill is generally predominant, they each dreaded that some misfortune had happened, which would throw a cloud over their present happiness. Ardolph and Theodore were indeed seriously alarmed, although they kept their fears a secret both from the Princess and Zulima;
for

for the latter, who was well acquainted with their various modes of communication with each other, had taken notice of the peculiar manner in which the request was delivered, and they even both fancied that they perceived a change in the countenance of Berthold.

Agreeable to the promise that Theodore had made to Roberto, the latter was permitted to attend upon Albert; he found him gloomy and melancholy, and at first appeared to listen with an apathetic indifference to the account which was given him of the late events. But when the villainy of Martuccio was pourtrayed to him, he seemed as if roused from a deep lethargy, and forgetting for the moment that he was deprived of all power, he commanded Roberto to bring the traitor to the Castle, that he might suffer a punishment due to his enormous crimes. A look, given by Roberto, recalled him to a recollection of his situation, and giving a deep sigh, he again sunk into his former despondency.

His

His generous friend, however, endeavoured to sooth his irritated feelings, by descanting upon the high sense of honour which Theodore de Mountfort possessed ; and that the Princess of Clagenfurth, having unmasked the designs of the traitorous hypocrite, orders had been already given for the securing of Martuccio's person : this information seemed to afford some satisfaction, although he took no material notice of it, but remained in the same state of abstraction as usual.

Ever since the arrival of Theodore at the Castle of Mittewald, many of the restrictions, which had been so rigorously enforced had been omitted, and any person had free admittance, after having passed a strict examination at the gate, as the draw-bridge was no longer drawn up but at sunset.

One morning, while Roberto was endeavouring to amuse his chief, a sealed packet was brought in and delivered to Albert. The superscription startled him,
and

and he could not help exclaiming, "It is from that villain Martuccio ; what new deception is he attempting to practise ? he will, however, find it a difficult matter to impose upon me a second time."

He opened it with eagerness, and hastily ran over the contents ; for a moment a flush of joy animated his countenance ; but it soon subsided, and he again sunk into deep reflection. Roberto awaited in silent anxiety the issue of a scene, which, from the manner of his chief, he deemed was of importance ; he dreaded the arts of Martuccio, and thought that he possessed a greater influence over the mind of Albert than ever he himself suspected. Perceiving that the latter, however, continued silent, he ventured to intrude, by asking if he could be of any service to him ?

The voice of Roberto aroused him as from a dream, and grasping his hand, with an agitation that shewed the tempest that raged within his bosom, he exclaimed, "Yes, my friend, of the greatest, and in

the most difficult of all attempts, *the conquest of myself.*"

Roberto looked surprised; he had guessed that the packet contained some extraordinary intelligence, but did not suppose it possible it could be productive of a scene like the present. His answer, however, was consonant to that regard which he had always professed for his chief; and he requested he would unburthen his mind to him, as he promised most faithfully to obey his commands, even should his life be the sacrifice.

"Rodolphus," said Albert, "is in my power."

Roberto started; an indescribable horror shot through his soul, as he heard the unexpected and important intelligence; while fixing his eyes intently upon his chief, he endeavoured to discover the secret working of his soul; yet, notwithstanding his scrutiny, the thoughts of Albert were impenetrable, who, without appearing to notice the behaviour of Roberto,

berto, continued—"Hear what that arch hypocrite says.

'The news of your misfortune reached me in my solitary cell, and knowing that I was included in the vengeance of Theodore de Mountfort, for the part I took to serve you, respecting the Princess of Clagenfurth, I determined to escape from the monastery, more particularly as for some time past I have suspected that the father St. Eustace carries on a correspondence with those in the Castle; and I even sometimes fancy that his features, the little I can see of them, as he usually keeps his hood over his face as much as possible, under the pretence of protecting his eyes, are not unknown to me; though the idea is so vague, that I cannot ascertain it with accuracy sufficient to take any advantage of it; but as caution has always been considered by me better than an over security, I deemed it best to decamp. To you, who have felt the power of love, I dare appeal for forgiveness for my past conduct, and to re-

quest it may be buried in oblivion. Fortune has been propitious in giving me the power of presenting a peace-offering worthy of your acceptance. The long-undiscovered Rodolphus is in my power; you can best appreciate the value of such a prize; and the bearer of the packet, whose fidelity is unquestionable, shall, upon the production of your signet, convey him to whatever place of safety you may determine; expedition is necessary. An accident threw Rodolphus in my way, and a similar one may deprive me of him.'

"Such, Roberto, are the contents of this important packet; had such an event taken place some time ago, I might have been happy, but now——"

"Forgive me, my liege," said Roberto, who had recovered from his surprise, "if I differ from you; you have honoured me, by asking my assistance in a case the most delicate; both my duty to you as my chief, and the sincere regard I have ever had for you as a man, demand my compliance.

Yet,

Yet, with this disposition, dare I venture to withdraw the film that has so long clouded the eyes of my sovereign?"

"I requested the assistance of a friend," replied Albert, with unusual energy, "not of a slave."

This answer, as well as the manner in which it was delivered, conveyed an indescribable pleasure to the generous heart of Roberto, who, with an animation that gave additional force to his expressions, replied, "Now then, I can rejoice in the discovery of Martuccio, since it presents a noble opportunity of restoring the fame of my beloved Prince, and of making him a rival in glory to Theodore de Mountfort. Already is the prophecy upon the eve of being finally completed, as the restoration of the legal heir to the principality of Clagenfurth was denounced as the conclusion of the sufferings of its former conqueror. Dare then to be just, and a life of happiness and fame awaits you: perhaps too—for who knows the extent of gratitude for

a son restored ? the prejudice of the lovely Adeline, though deeply rooted, may ultimately give way to a softer passion ; and what force could never effect, may become the willing reward for the renewal of maternal happiness."

Roberto had most judiciously touched the right chord, for scarce had he concluded, than Albert, laying aside all distinction of rank, embraced him as his equal, exclaiming, " Oh ! how superior are the dictates of virtue to those of vice ! hitherto my days have passed under the degrading influence of unlimited power ; my will, the law ; my passions, my sole and sovereign guide : henceforward the precepts of the Count Von Werdenberg, whose miraculous re-appearance at this critical moment seems almost the act of a superior power, shall be my guide, and by following his steps, I may in time, perhaps, prove myself worthy of the friendship of Theodore de Mountfort, and the love of the Princess : but," continued Albert, " in what
manner

manner shall we rescue Rodolphus from the power of Martuccio, whose hypocrisy I still dread? neither do I think him sincere in his motives for this disclosure."

"Permit me," replied Roberto, "to entrust your intentions to Berthold, who, from the extensive knowledge he possesses, as well as his known attachment to Theodore and the Princess, will, I doubt not, accomplish all your wishes to the utmost extent; he must, however, be furnished with your signet."

"There is a mystery," replied Albert, "about Berthold, that I cannot fathom; but as I well know the respect in which he is universally held, I shall freely entrust the management to him; but let the utmost secrecy be observed until success is assured. Take therefore the signet, and impress the necessity of expedition."

Roberto having received his final instructions, which gave him the most sincere pleasure, hastened to one of the associates, who, he had observed, next to Sebastian,

seemed to be treated with the greatest confidence by his captain. It was Bernardo, to whom having disclosed that he wished to see Berthold upon a matter that embraced the most important consequences, it was delivered as already mentioned.

Berthold was immediately conducted to an apartment, where he found Roberto awaiting him with the utmost impatience ; without any prelude, he acquainted him with the important intelligence, and the intentions, together with the wishes, of the repentant Albert. The latter part of this information was received with the greatest joy ; but it received a considerable alloy, from an account respecting Rodolphus so totally unexpected, as he had left his young charge but a few days before, safe under protection which he deemed perfectly secure, it having been for years the occasional retreat of the noble youth. For a moment he suspected some of his band of treachery, but his generous mind soon discarded the idea, and refused to harbour

so cruel a suspicion on such slight foundation. He was sensible, however, that no time was to be lost; and he accordingly gave secret directions to some of his associates to follow him unperceived to where-soever the guide was directed to take him, as the person commissioned by Albert to take charge of Rodolphus: but Berthold was not to be the dupe to appearances; he had been made acquainted with the whole character of Martuccio, and consequently mistrusted his present intentions. He accordingly took every precaution to ensure his own success, even against numbers, and to detect the wily Italian. He dreaded to acquaint either Theodore or Ardolph with the reason of his sudden departure from the Castle, at the time when the arrival of the Count Von Werdenberg was daily expected; for although he was aware that his absence would produce great uneasiness to all his friends, yet he thought even that better than to inform them of the truth, particularly after his late declaration of the

safety of the young Prince ; these considerations, joined to the wishes of Albert himself for secrecy, until the arrival of Rodolphus, calmed all his fears of Martuccio's duplicity, and determined him to set off privately, accompanied only by his guide, and Bernardo, whom, he observed, it was necessary to take with him, in order to attend upon the youth, who was to be delivered to his care ; this was an arrangement that seemed to give the guide some uneasiness at first, but as he supposed there was only one, (for the others had been privately sent out of the Castle, with orders to watch for them at a certain distance from it) his chagrin at length wore off. Berthold soon perceived that their route lay towards the place where, by his orders, Sebastian had left Rodolphus, for it was him who had accompanied the former to the northern apartments, and had been, as already mentioned, seen by the Princess of Clagenfurth.

When they had arrived within about two miles of the place, they turned out of the
main

main road to the left, and Berthold recognized a cottage which he was well acquainted with; he had ceased to apprehend any serious danger from Martuccio, from the moment he found the direction in which they were travelling, as he knew that there was not a person in the neighbourhood but what was in his own interest; yet still he thought it best not to relax in his precautions. The cottage he saw was pointed out to him by his guide as the residence of Martuccio, who was at that instant recognized by Bernardo coming out from the interior, and looking round, as if in anxious expectation of seeing somebody; but finding himself disappointed, he returned within the doors. As one of their objects of pursuit was in view, they halted a few minutes to consult upon the best mode of action; it was necessary to make sure of the guide, and Berthold, who never shed the blood of the innocent, determined to try what he had before proved efficacious, if the terror of his name would

not be sufficient to bind him to his service. Accordingly, turning suddenly to him, he said, in a stern voice, "You see before you Berthold, and here is one of my brave associates." As he judged, so it happened; the man, terrified to an excess, begged him to spare his life, and that, if he would trust him, he would ever serve him faithfully. They accordingly told him what was required of him, and Berthold, by the answers he gave to some questions which were put to him, found that it was to mere accident that Martuccio discovered Rodolphus; this afforded him great satisfaction, as it entirely expelled the suspicion of treachery in any of his brave associates.

Arranging therefore their plan of operations, Berthold proceeded to the front of the cottage, accompanied by his new proselyte, who had declared himself ambitious of being admitted into his service, while Bernardo, unseen, went round to the back part. As Martuccio perceived their approach, he was ready to receive them, although

though he made some hesitation in introducing Berthold, whose person was unknown to him, into the cottage, until the latter, producing the signet, declared the commands of Albert. This was an unexpected stroke to Martuccio, as he fancied that he should alone have had the conduct of the business. Berthold immediately perceived his hesitation, and judged that his appearance had totally deranged all his deep-laid schemes; but as he did not instantly answer, he repeated the demand. Martuccio now threw off all reserve, and unsuspicious of the defalcation of his former assistant, exclaimed in a voice intended to strike terror into his auditor, "Who are you, who dares assume a power to direct where Martuccio commands? Go back to the abject Albert, and tell him I pay no obedience to a prisoner; depart, for your life shall pay the forfeit of your insolence."

Berthold, casting a smile of ineffable contempt upon him, replied in a tone that chilled

chilled the blood of the boasting hypocrite, "When did the life of Berthold depend upon the will of the traitor Martuccio?"

As the Indian, when the deadly snake suddenly crosses the tract he is pursuing, looks aghast at the sight of the venomous animal, so did Martuccio when he heard the name of Berthold; his first motion was an attempt to escape; but at that instant Bernardo entered with Rodolphus, whom he had found in a back part of the cottage: no sooner did the young Prince perceive Berthold, than he flew to embrace him; and at that instant they were joined by those of the band who had been commanded to follow from the Castle.

There was a wildness in the countenance of Martuccio that seemed to indicate a disposition of making some desperate attempt; and from the looks which he cast towards the young Rodolphus, Berthold, who had taken particular notice of him, ordered his companions to seize him as a prisoner, and
at

at the same time to search his person very minutely, lest he should retain any concealed weapons. This command was executed, although not without great opposition, as Martuccio struggled for a considerable time, and even slightly wounded Bernardo in the attempt, who would instantly have revenged it by plunging his dagger into his heart, had not a look from his chief prevented him. "Let him not," said Berthold, "experience a death so honourable; the wrongs of the Princess of Clagenfurth, of his betrayed chief, and of mankind in general, demand a more public and ignominious end. Secure him therefore with the greatest safety," said he, turning to his associates; "and remember, your lives are answerable for his."

"True, my chief," replied Bernardo, "I should have felt a sincere regret, had my momentary indignation deprived the hangman of his dues; and although I know my brave companions here will most strictly obey every wish of their beloved chief, yet
I shall

I shall feel a satisfaction in partaking of the charge, until our arrival at the Castle ; for as I dare say he will be very cheerful at the prospect of seeing all his old friends collected together, his adventures will amuse."

"Be it so," said Berthold, smiling ; "and as we have every thing in readiness, let us instantly set off on our return, for I feel impatient to introduce my young friend to those who have the strongest claims upon his affection."

"Ah, Sir," replied Rodolphus, "whatever is decreed to be my future destiny, it can never obliterate the parental attention I have received from those under whose protection I have so long lived."

Berthold pressed his hand with fervour ; the hearts of both seemed too full for further conversation, and they recommenced their journey in silence. They had arrived within a day's journey of Mittewald Castle ; and had just selected a spot for their nightly encampment, when the trampling of horses announced

announced the approach of other travellers; and as Berthold himself was preparing to reconnoitre their appearance, a signal, as from one of his associates, was heard, and was no sooner repeated than Sebastian, accompanied by Henry Count Von Werdenberg and Matilda, appeared. The joy of this sudden rencontre was mutual; all thoughts of rest were laid aside, and the night was passed in various explanations; indeed Berthold was so much taken up with paying every possible attention to the Count and Matilda, that it was some time before he perceived that the prophetic sibyl was of the party. Sensible of her importance, and of his own neglect, he would have apologized; but this she would not permit, saying, "that he had too much to think of to attend upon her; besides," added she, with as much good humour as she could assume, "recollect, my servants are always awaiting my signal."

The conversation that passed during the night was of course relative to the discoveries

ries which had taken place, more particularly those of Rodolphus and Zulima: the reception of the former, by the Count, had been truly paternal; and as he viewed the elegant appearance of the youth, he cherished the hope that the charms of his Zulima might obtain the possession of a heart formed in the school of the most rigid virtue; while Matilda, who, ever since the knowledge of her birth, had been taught to cherish the memory of her absent brother, glowed with unaffected delight, as he pressed upon her cheek the first kiss of fraternal love. All congratulated him upon his escape from the power of Martuccio, whose complicated crimes struck horror into every heart.

Berthold, unknown to the Count, had dispatched one of his men, with orders to be secret as to his own expedition, but merely to announce his speedy arrival, accompanied by the Count, Matilda, and the sibyl of the forest. A double motive actuated him to this measure; for he not
only

only wished to prepare them for the reception of the Count and his friends, but also for the present to disguise the true reason of his absence, or the return of the young Rodolphus with him, until he had consulted both Albert and the Count ; and he conjectured that by returning with the latter, they would, until it was proper to discover the truth, attribute his late sudden absence to some intelligence which he had received respecting that revered friend.

The conduct of Martuccio, during their journey, was insolent and daring ; and he appeared to leave no method untried, by which he might irritate his guards, and provoke them to immediate revenge ; but the implicit obedience which they had ever been accustomed to pay to the orders of their chief, prevented his design, although Bernardo, who minutely attended to all his actions, found great difficulty in restraining the impatience of several of his comrades, whose tempers were ill calculated to suffer insult with impunity. The nearer they
approached

approached the Castle, the more outrageous were the expressions of Martuccio; and at length Bernardo determined, as he could not punish his insolence as he wished, that he would at least prevent him from uttering it, and accordingly he commanded a gag to be put into his mouth; this was instantly and joyfully performed, and in that manner was the hypocrite taken to the Castle, amidst the scoffs and laughter of the whole circle of menials.

During the latter part of their journey, Berthold had consulted with the Count Von Werdenberg, and the sibyl, who was admitted to their private conference, as to the most proper mode to be adopted for the introduction of Rodolphus, when it was agreed that his return with them to the Castle should not be taken notice of until they had held a consultation with Albert; and as they thought, judging from prior circumstances, that the sibyl would have the greatest influence over his mind, she was appointed to wait upon him, as soon as

Roberto.

Roberto had announced to him the success of Berthold, in rescuing the young Rodolphus from the hands of Martuccio, and the arrival of the latter, as a prisoner, awaiting the punishment due to his crimes.

The well-known signal for the approach of travellers was no sooner made, than it was joyfully answered from the interior of the Castle, where Theodore, Ardolph, Adeline, and Zulima, were anxiously awaiting their arrival, having received intelligence of their near advance, through the considerate prudence of Berthold, he having sent, as before observed, a messenger forward, in order to prevent their surprise, and also to make some arrangements, which, according to the plan they had settled, were necessary, lest a premature discovery of the return of Rodolphus should defeat them.

As soon as they had entered the gates, Roberto, who had been ordered to meet them there, expressed his sincere happiness at their success; adding, that Albert was so completely altered in his disposition,

as to afford a happy prospect to his friends for his future welfare. "The restoration of Rodolphus," said he, "is become the primary object of his wishes, and the fear lest he should not be rescued from the power of that wily hypocrite, has been so great as to prevent him even from taking his natural rest ; and I feel firmly convinced that most, if not all, of those tyrannical actions, which he has lately been guilty of, have proceeded from the artful suggestions of his traitorous minion, who, I trust, will not be permitted to escape the punishment due to the enormity of his offences."

"To render your wish effectual," replied the Count Von Werdenberg, "do you and Bernardo take the charge of him, and see him fettered so securely as to prevent any possible attempt against his own life ; and remember, that until we have had an interview with Albert, the knowledge that Rodolphus is in the Castle must be confined to yourself."

Roberto thanked the Count for the confidence

fidence which he had placed in him, assuring him of his strict adherence to his directions; adding, "The greatest pleasure I can receive, next to seeing the restoration of my chief's happiness, will be the punishment of that miscreant, who, not content with urging him to commit acts that alienated the affection of his best friends, basely deserted him at his utmost need; and to add, if possible, to his villany, endeavoured to rob him of that sole comfort that he looked forward to, in the midst of his greatest misfortunes."

Roberto and Bernardo immediately dragged their prisoner to his dungeon, where, for the first time, they took away the impediment to his speech; and having secured him beyond the possibility of his injuring his own life, they left him uttering the most dreadful imprecations.

But although these arrangements were judicious, there was one heart that felt disappointed; and Rodolphus, who had long anticipated the joy of seeing a mother, of whom

whom he was too young to have any recollection when taken from her arms, felt uneasy at the delay ; yet, as he was satisfied that Berthold, whom he respected as a father, and whose wishes were to him equivalent to the most positive orders, had a sufficient reason for imposing this temporary restraint, he stifled every appearance of regret ; and in the company of Sebastian, who was ordered to attend him until he was publicly announced in his real character, he felt the hours pass away without experiencing the languor which is too commonly the attendant of inaction.

Henry Count Von Werdenberg, who, having been previously forewarned by the sibyl, had received the intelligence brought to him by Sebastian with a manly fortitude, felt his resolution abate, now that he was on the point of beholding a long-lost daughter, the image of her with whose existence his own had almost closed ; for had it not been for the accidental arrival of Theodore and Sternheim at his chosen asylum, it was
more

more than probable that he would never have returned to that society of which Nature had destined him to shine a conspicuous member, but which had lost the only charms that had once attached him to it. Numerous were the inquiries that he made of Sebastian, and with breathless pleasure he listened to the oft-told tale, in which not only her external beauties were depicted in faithful colours, but those also of her mind; and the knowledge that she was found worthy of the friendship of the Princess of Clagenfurth, most fully, in his mind, stamped the true value of her perfections. But although he had heard every thing from Sebastian that was possible to be known, yet Berthold was requested to repeat it over and over again.

At the interesting moment when he entered the hall, where the Princess and Zulima were waiting to receive him, he could scarcely support himself, although assisted by the arm of Berthold ; he gazed eagerly around ; the features of Zulima were too

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deeply engraven on his heart to be mistaken, and for an instant he almost fancied that it was herself, just as she appeared when first she owned her love. Zulima had risen from her seat the moment he entered, in order to meet him, but she trembled so excessively, as to be unable to proceed; when the Princess, who perceived her distress, hastened to her assistance. Neither was the Count less agitated; for a few moments he seemed lost, when, suddenly rushing forward, he found himself embraced by the image of his sainted Zulima; scarcely could he articulate "My child, my child!" when tears at the recollection of the past trickled down his venerable cheeks, and he suffered himself to be seated upon the sofa; still, however, he kept hold of Zulima, as if fearful she should again be taken away from him; and it was a considerable space of time before a sufficient degree of composure was established between any of the parties.

The attention of the Princess of Clagen-
furth

furth had been so entirely engrossed by Zulima, that Matilda had passed unnoticed; the latter, however, readily excused the seeming neglect, or indeed scarcely thought of it, as it had given her an opportunity of enjoying a long *tête-à-tête* with Theodore; neither was he less pleased; but perceiving that his friends seemed more composed, he took his betrothed bride by the hand, and introduced her as such to his sister and Zulima. Adeline started when the features of Matilda first met her view; the rose yielded to the lily; and it was evident that the presence of Matilda had occasioned her some unpleasant reflection; it was, however, soon dissipated; and taking her in her arms, she embraced her with the affection of a mother, observing, that she had no sooner made the discovery of her birth, than she had determined to take her under her own care, had not circumstances, with which she was doubtless acquainted, deprived her of the power; "nor will you, my dear Theodore," she continued, "or your
o 2 beloved

beloved Matilda, be surprised at the manner of your first reception, when you are told that the agitation I could not conceal was caused by the great resemblance of your intended bride to her illustrious father."

Mutual congratulations ensued, and the generous Ardolph was so overwhelmed with the genuine gratitude expressed by the Count Von Werdenberg for the protection of his daughter, that it almost became painful to him ; nor was he sorry when the conversation was put a stop to by the suggestion of the Princess, that the great exertions they had undergone in the course of the day, rendered it prudent for the females at least to retire to rest ; "and I have ordered that my two daughters (for as such, said she, with a smile, I shall claim you both) shall occupy the same apartments as myself." These preparations were soon made, and they retired to their repose, with a greater portion of happiness than they had any of them experienced for a long time.

The arrival of Berthold, together with the
Count

Count Von Werdenberg and the young Rodolphus, was immediately made known to Albert by Roberto, who likewise told his chief the orders he had received respecting Martuccio. The eyes of Albert glistened at the intelligence, and it was evident, that had the fate of his former minion depended upon him, he would have experienced an immediate punishment. "Now," exclaimed he, "I feel the want of power; but will the Count Von Werdenberg, will Theodore de Mountfort, or even the lovely Adeline herself, permit crimes of such enormous magnitude to pass unpunished? impossible! Though enemies, their hearts are the seats of justice, and they will revenge the injuries of Albert as well as their own."

"Spare yourself, my liege," replied Roberto, "any uneasiness upon this account; the base Martuccio is doomed by the general voice, and your sanction only retards his punishment."

"Mine, Roberto! mine, a prisoner!"

“Soon, my chief,” replied Roberto, “I trust you will no longer be so; even now is the prophecy completed, and Rodolphus restored, the solemn denunciation ceases. The sibyl of the forest——”

“Ah! what of her?” exclaimed Albert; “years have passed since that mysterious being crossed my path. Would that I had listened to her advice! but no matter; it is too late to prevent, though not to remedy the past. But say, what know you of the sibyl?”

“She accompanied the Count Von Werdenberg hither,” replied Roberto; “and is even now preparing for an interview with my chief.”

Albert shuddered; his mind seemed distracted by contending passions, as a rapid review of his actions, subsequent to his last interview with her, passed in succession across it: at length, exerting the remains of his former heroism, he exclaimed, “Be it so:” then softening his voice, he continued, leaning on the shoulder of Roberto, as if to support

support himself, " Believe me, Roberto, I had rather face the most terrific front of war than encounter the look of this dreaded being."

The judicious observations, however, of that faithful attendant, strengthened the mind of Albert, whose heart, divested of that pride which, increasing from his earlier years, had by degrees attained an height not to be controuled, now felt a return of those noble feelings in which alone true heroism consists. A firm principle of justice had dethroned the demon of revenge; and when he calmly reviewed his past actions, he shuddered at the enormity of his guilt, and owned the punishment he had suffered, though severe, to be just.

It not unfrequently happens, that a man who is convinced of his errors sufficiently to abjure them, and is determined to pursue a course diametrically the reverse to that which he had so strenuously persisted in, enters upon his opposite career with an energy and sincerity equal, if not superior,

to his former misconduct ; such was the case of Albert ; he found his haughty spirit subdued by fate itself ; and while he contemplated the characters of his brave opponents, he almost wondered that he could have been so long blind to the charms of virtue. The actions of Henry Von Werdenberg, of Theodore de Mountfort, and even of the mysterious Berthold, passed in rapid succession before his view, and his mind weighed them in the balance with his own. It is true, the battles he had fought, the victories he had gained, were as brilliant as those in which his opponents had been engaged ; but his were the result either of ambition or revenge, while theirs proceeded from the wish of protecting the oppressed ; and while the one obtained the curses, the other engaged the affection both of their own adherents, and of many of their adversaries.

In this disposition the Count Von Werdenberg, who had previously intimated his intention of paying him a visit, found him.

Albert

Albert received him with such a dignity, blended with respect, as interested the venerable Count, who soon felt convinced that the generality of his past actions proceeded more from a blind confidence in others, than in a natural depravity of heart. Few words were necessary between men whose real dispositions were founded on virtue, and a treaty of amity was soon concluded, equally to the honour of both parties.

As soon as this important business was settled, Theodore, Berthold, and the young Rodolphus, were introduced, and a general reconciliation took place, to the infinite satisfaction of the generous Roberto, who could not refrain from tears, at the happy reverse of his master's fortune.

While they were thus enjoying the satisfaction arising from the late events, the sibyl made her appearance unannounced. Albert started, and hastily concealed his face in his robe, as if afraid to encounter her looks. She was habited in the exact

costume as when she first denounced his fates. Perceiving his agitation, she advanced towards him, and in a voice as mild as she could assume, said, "Albert, fear not; the time long since foretold is now arrived; and the son of Sigismond, no longer the slave of the demon of revenge, shall again shine forth to the world with renovated lustre. Hitherto you have proved my predictions just. Once more then attend, and remember, that as long as you make your brave and virtuous opponents a pattern for your actions, happiness shall attend you, and love—but I am forbid to disclose its secrets. Once more, farewell; and while virtue remains your guide, the sibyl of the forest will prove a faithful guardian."

With this admonition she departed; nor could the united entreaties of the Count and Theodore prevail on her to remain any longer at the Castle.

During her speech, the attention of Albert, who conquered his first reluctance,
was

was rivetted upon her; and at the pause his heart beat quick, as he hoped she would have foretold his success with Adeline. The disappointment was as great as his hopes had been flattering, and he scarcely listened to the remaining part of her speech.

After the departure of the sibyl, a general conversation took place, during which, Albert, addressing himself to the Count and Theodore, said, "Dare I venture to request an introduction to the Princess of Clagenfurth?"

Theodore knew not how to answer; but the Count, taking Rodolphus by the hand, and placing it in Albert's, said, "This may possibly procure you your wish, and indeed it is time that the Princess should be put out of suspense. I will prepare her for the interview."

Albert returned his thanks for the kindness which he had received; and the Count saying as he went out, "Remember Martuccio," sought the apartment where

Adeline, together with her young friends, were anxiously awaiting the result of their consultations.

The parting words of the Count were not neglected, and the sentence of death was decreed both by Albert and Theodore, when Berthold, who had purposely kept silent, observed, that he thought his crimes were such as not to merit death.

“How!” cried both Albert and Theodore, in amaze; “can Berthold, who seemed the most exasperated against Martuccio, seek to skreen him from a punishment he has so well deserved?”

“Excuse me, my friends, if I again repeat my sentiments. Death to such a wretch as Martuccio, must be a blessing, not a punishment; no, let him live, but in such a state as he shall have reason to deprecate the proffered mercy; nor can it be deemed a punishment too severe for crimes such as he has been guilty of. You know, Theodore, the cavern in which those who are guilty of treachery to our brave associates
are

are immured : let him be conducted there, and I will answer for his security."

"Your observation," replied Theodore, "was just, and I doubt not but that Albert will relinquish his punishment to you, when I assure him that I had rather suffer the most excruciating torments devised by man, than experience the life doomed for Martuccio."

Albert readily gave way ; and it was agreed, that in order to prevent any solicitations from the Princess, who, from a mistaken mercy, might attempt to mitigate his doom by entreaties, which they might find difficult to resist, orders should immediately be given to convey Martuccio to the prison where the associates confined their refractory brethren ; and to prevent any possibility of escape, either by art or bribery, Bernardo was entrusted with the execution of the sentence, an employment which, although he was very far from being of a sanguinary nature, he accepted with pleasure.

In vain did Martuccio, who, from his former

mer mode of life, well knew the nature and extent of his punishment, beg for immediate execution ; all were deaf to his entreaties, and all acknowledged that his punishment was not more than adequate to the heinousness of his crimes.

In the mean time, the Count had repaired to the apartment of the Princess, where he, in the most delicate manner, acquainted her with the past transactions, concluding with the request of Albert, that she would receive her long-lost son Rodolphus from his hands. The feelings of Adeline were such as can be better imagined than described ; nor can they be duly appreciated but by those who have experienced similar trials ; for although she had been gradually prepared by preceding circumstances for the event, yet the reality at first overpowered her. Her own good sense, and the persuasive arguments of the Count, at length restored her resolution ; yet still she shuddered at the idea of receiving her son from the hands of the man
who

who had murdered his father; but when the contrition of Albert was pointed out to her by the Count, as well as the reconciliation of Theodore, joined with his own approbation of his present conduct, all these circumstances, combined with the completion of the prophecy, induced her to give way to his representations.

As soon as it was known that the Princess would receive him, Albert advanced with a trembling step, accompanied by Theodore and Berthold, and taking the young Rodolphus in his hand, they entered the apartment of the Princess, where the Count and Ardolph awaited their arrival.

The scene which ensued might furnish a group for a painter, that would call forth all the exertions of his art. The Princess of Clagenfurth sat upon a sofa, supported upon each side by Zulima and Matilda, pressing the young Rodolphus in her arms, although scarcely sensible of the happiness she enjoyed; while Albert knelt at her feet, watching with the greatest anxiety every
5 turn

turn of her countenance, which would sometimes exhibit a wildness that sufficiently proved her ideas were not entirely collected. In the front stood the Count and Theodore, with her other friends, who, although naturally interested in the concerns of the Princess, beheld with pleasure the amiable attention of Zulima and Matilda, and the looks of approbation which they received from the parent, and the lover, gave them an amelioration that rendered them more lovely than usual.

As both joy and grief, however, has its limits, Nature at length resumed its proper functions, and the mind of Adeline became composed and attentive to the passing scene; perceiving Albert at her feet, she requested him to rise, saying, "As fate has ordained that I should receive my long-lost Rodolphus from your hands, time may, perhaps, eradicate those impressions so deeply engraven on my heart. The present you have made me (pressing Rodolphus to her bosom) is too valuable to be
received

received with apathy; and I will endeavour to forget.”—Adeline burst into tears; and Albert, much affected, yet flattered by what the Princess had said, replied in a voice almost inaudible from agitation, “Forgive me, Madam, for calling forth, by my presence, those feelings of which I must ever lament the cause; and as I am truly sensible of the kindness of my reception, and that at the present moment I only enhance your distress, permit me to retire.”

The Princess, incapable of answering, bowed; and Albert, turning to Zulima and Matilda, to whom he had been previously introduced by the Count Von Werdenberg, added, “To you, ladies, I leave my cause, convinced that you will not be more cruel to my interest than my noble friends.” He then departed, together with his friends, all of whom, except Ardolph, accompanied him; but the latter, at the request of the Princess, remained with Rodolphus.

Several days passed in forming different arrangements; messengers were dispatched

to

to Clagenfurth, with the information of the foregoing events to the Chevalier D'Armfeldt, and Sternheim, who, together with De Rosenberg and Alphonsine, they having, according to the request of Berthold, repaired to that city, were awaiting in anxious expectation and suspense, the arrival of intelligence: the news gave the sincerest joy; it was soon dispersed through the principality, and the greatest preparations were made for the reception of their young sovereign and his revered mother.

The Princess of Clagenfurth soon recovered from the effect produced by the restoration of Rodolphus, and with her happiness her health and beauty returned. The Castle of Mittewald, from having been the scene of gloomy solitude, became the abode of gaiety and happiness; nor did any one rejoice in the change more than the generous Roberto and his family, whom the liberality of the Count Von Werdenberg most amply remunerated for their kindness to the Princess.

Albert

Albert was now frequently admitted to their society ; he however carefully avoided any conduct that could in the least alarm the Princess, who insensibly became reconciled to his company ; and before they left Mittewald, he was made happy by an invitation to accompany them to Clagenfurth, where the Count assured him he would be received by the people with respect, as the restorer of their young Prince. The invitation was too flattering to be refused ; and the Princess making no objection, the necessary preparations were made for their departure from Mittewald.

Previous, however, to this, two events of some importance took place. The Count deemed it necessary that a special messenger should be sent to Vienna, with dispatches to lay before the Emperor in person. At first he seemed in doubt whether or not to go himself ; Ardolph, to whom he mentioned the circumstance, offered his services, observing, that it was his intention to follow his adopted child to Clagenfurth,

Clagenfurth, for which purpose he should resign the situation that he held, which he must do to the Emperor in person. This arrangement was peculiarly satisfactory to the Count, who told him at the same time, that Berthold would accompany him. Ardolph was surprised ; when the Count, who perceived it, said with a smile, " Before you return the mystery will cease ; but you must not be surprised to find the captain of banditti received by the Emperor with greater favour than yourself."

" Well," replied Ardolph, " I see I must have patience ; but I am content, as I well know that every action of the Count Von Werdenberg is dictated by prudence and propriety."

Berthold had previously known of this arrangement, and had made preparations accordingly. Before, however, he set out, Albert, who seemed drawn towards him by an invisible tie, said, " Berthold, I wish not to penetrate your secret, yet I feel myself compelled to esteem you ; nor can I, though

I, though against the evidence of my eyes and ears, consider you as a captain of banditti. Be what you may, however, as I am determined never again to set foot within these territories, if they are of any value to you, accept them from me. Hold, (seeing Berthold going to interrupt him) I will not be denied; my followers here, I shall provide for elsewhere; yet, if there are any who wish to remain, and you chuse to incorporate them with your associates, they have my permission."

"Albert," replied Berthold, "I accept your generous offer, and on my return from an interview with the Emperor, I will make the necessary arrangements."

Albert started with astonishment, and exclaimed, "Berthold, are you in your senses? are you going to Vienna? you an interview with the Emperor!"

"Even so," replied Berthold, with a smile; "but at present I can only repeat, that I accept your offer with pleasure; and I flatter myself that it will not be long before

fore the bandit Berthold shall repay the noble generosity of Albert.”

This circumstance, however, detained them some time longer at Mittewald, as it was necessary that Berthold should give some directions to his new household, although he left the principal part of the arrangement to Sebastian. He then assembled the whole band, and informed them of his new acquisition; this intelligence was received with the most enthusiastic applause by his associates, who became more than ever attached to him; and so much was he beloved, that many of the garrison requested leave to remain with him; their offers, after they had undergone the usual ceremonies, were accepted; and Sebastian having been declared captain of the Castle, with Bernardo as his lieutenant under him, every thing was in readiness for their departure.

It is unnecessary to follow either Berthold to Vienna, or to describe the journey of the Princess to Clagenfurth; nothing material

terial took place until their arrival at that city, where the latter was received with every demonstration of joy that a grateful people could shew for the restoration of the heir to a family so universally beloved.

The Chevalier D'Armfeldt received them at the entrance of the city; and having welcomed the cavalcade with every honour that could be devised, he declared the Prince Rodolphus sovereign of the principality. An universal shout testified the approbation of the multitude; while Adeline, shedding tears of pure joy, silently offered up her thanks to Providence, which had supported them through all their dangers. The lovely Alphonsine was introduced to the Princess, and also to Zulima and Matilda, who received her with pleasure; and from that moment a friendship commenced between these young beauties, that proved the solace of their future days; nor was it long before they perceived that their young friend had engaged the affections of the Chevalier D'Armfeldt, a discovery

very

very that added to the satisfaction they experienced at her first introduction, as this alliance would be the means of uniting the whole family.

The reception of Albert, supported as he was by the friendship of their young Prince and the Count Von Werdenberg, was more gratifying than his most sanguine hopes could expect ; no murmurs or allusions to past transactions wounded his ears, or made him dread any act of indignity. In his behaviour to the Princess, his conduct was perfectly correct ; and those amiable qualities with which Nature had endowed him, but which the flattery and art of those by whom he was surrounded had perverted, now shone with such lustre as to gain him the esteem of those who had been his most powerful enemies. Sensible, however, that some time must elapse before he could expect the impressions so deeply engraven on the heart of the Princess to be eradicated, he hinted his intention of withdrawing himself for some time from the court ;

court; but in this he was opposed both by the Count Von Werdenberg and Theodore; and even the Princess herself seemed to desire his stay, although she cautiously avoided expressing her sentiments.

But amidst those who exulted in the happiness of those around him, no one was more sanguine than the venerable and faithful Sternheim; he had been introduced by Adeline to Rodolphus as the chosen favourite of his father; and he had the happiness to find that he was held in equal esteem by the son; to him the young Prince would freely disclose the secrets of his heart; nor could he have chosen a more worthy confidant: it was not long, however, before his penetration discovered that the wishes of the Count and the Princess of Clagenfurth were likely to be fulfilled; for unused to disguise his sentiments, Rodolphus soon disclosed to his friend that he could not behold Zulima with indifference, and he besought him to sound the Count upon the subject; it was an employment

that gave him joy, as he well knew the wishes of all parties.

The Count and Princess received the intelligence with a satisfaction that neither endeavoured to conceal; and as the attachment was mutual, it was determined that all the marriages should take place at the same time, when D'Armfeldt, Theodore, and Rodolphus led their blooming brides to the altar.

The rejoicings which had taken place upon the restoration of Rodolphus were renewed with greater splendour upon his marriage; but no one contributed more to them than Berthold, who had returned from Vienna; he seemed not only the director, but the life of every amusement. Balls, tournaments, and every heroic exercise that could stimulate the youthful mind to emulate the deeds of their fathers, were resorted to upon this occasion; while the youths, animated by the smiles of the fair, exerted themselves to deserve their future favours.

Thus

Thus passed the first weeks after the return of the Princess of Clagenfurth to the scene of her former happiness, when the party being one day collected together at the palace, she, turning to Berthold, said, "It was you that first gave ease to my aching heart, by informing me of the existence of my dear Rodolphus: circumstances at that time not only prevented a further disclosure, but involved the whole in greater mystery, which has increased ever since. When may we expect a solution of those occurrences which have created no small astonishment in the minds of all our friends?"—Berthold smiled, when the Count Von Werdenberg, taking up the discourse, replied, "The time is now arrived when part of the mystery at least may be disclosed, as I may be permitted to introduce the friend of my earlier days, by a name which the canker worm of malice has long traduced. In Berthold, the supposed captain of banditti, you behold Leopold, the brother of your beloved Emperor."

The astonishment depicted on the countenances of every one present, was commensurate with the sudden impression made by such an unexpected disclosure ; every eye was fixed upon him, while every tongue spontaneously repeated "Leopold," in a tone of doubtful surprise. "To himself," continued the Count, "I shall leave the relation of his adventures."

"It was my wish," replied Leopold, "to have related every circumstance of my life, and to have explained in the fullest manner my connexion with those falsely called banditti, as they have for years been under my command, with a regular commission from the Emperor ; so far am I permitted to explain ; but my friend Ardolph knows that at present I am restricted by the positive commands of the Emperor, who, at the same time, requests I would still continue as the captain of my brave associates, though no longer by the assumed name of Berthold, but Leopold. Thus far, however, Madame," continued he, addressing the Princess, "I
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am permitted to explain, that from his earliest infancy I have been the guardian of Rodolphus, and have protected him from those evils which otherwise he would have found it difficult to have escaped. Fortune threw Seckendorf into my power: we instantly recognized each other, and became friends. He entrusted me with the secret of his precious charge, confident that he could no where be so secure as when under my protection. During his life, and that of his amiable partner, they constantly superintended the education of their young charge, and at their decease I took care to provide proper masters in every useful science, and from that period considered him as my own son.

“ My establishment was such, and my plans so well executed, that nothing could pass in the neighbouring courts but I received intelligence of it; it was by this means, Theodore, that I became acquainted with the plot formed against your life, which I knew nothing but your removal for

a time to a place of safety could secure. I constantly corresponded with my brother, the present Emperor, by means of a confidential spy; and although he could not, from circumstances which are now no more, openly avow his partiality for me, yet he gave me, at my own request, the commission I have mentioned; and notwithstanding this was done by the unanimous approbation of my associates, they as yet know not my real name or quality; they will not, however, long remain in ignorance, as I have already given orders for the whole band to assemble at Mittewald, which I intend as my future residence, the grant which the generous Albert made being solemnly confirmed by the Emperor. This is more particularly my choice, as I shall be in such a central position as to be able to give the earliest assistance to my friends, at the same time as I can bid defiance to my enemies. To you, Albert, I am indebted for this gift; permit me, in return (producing at the same time a sealed packet)

packet) to offer you the fruitful territory of Treviso, lately ceded to the Emperor by the Venetian state, as a small return for your generosity to the unknown Berthold ; and remember, that, on all emergencies, the Lord of Mittewald is the friend of Albert."

Leopold ceased, and although pleased with this concise account, they all regretted the being deprived of hearing the adventures of his life, which were known only to the Emperor and the Count Von Werdenberg. Words were, however, inadequate to express the thanks of Adeline for the protection of Rodolphus ; but what the tongue refused to utter, the looks sufficiently explained.

Albert, in words expressive of his gratitude, thanked the generous Leopold, to whom he made no doubt but that he was indebted for the favour of the Emperor ; and as it was necessary for him to repair to Vienna, in order to be formally invested with his new territory, he mentioned his determination of setting off for that city,
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and felt much gratified when Leopold declared his intention of accompanying him.

As yet he had never ventured to give the most distant hint of his wishes to the Princess Adeline ; but neither his looks or his intention could be misconstrued. Before, however, he proceeded to Vienna, he resolved to know his fate, for which purpose he addressed Theodore de Mountfort. That noble youth had for some time past held Albert in the highest esteem ; nor was the Count Von Werdenberg less his friend. To him Theodore mentioned the perseverance of Albert, and expressed his own wishes that he might be successful. In company with so powerful an auxiliary, Theodore ventured to address his sister upon the subject ; for a long time she resisted all their arguments, until at length, yielding rather to the united wishes of her family and friends, than to her own desire, she consented to receive Albert as her husband, at the expiration of twelve months, if he continued to deserve the approbation

of her friends ; but at present she insisted that he should immediately set off for Vienna ; nor return to Clagenfurth until within a month of the allotted time.

With these conditions, although he thought them severe, Albert was obliged to comply : accordingly he repaired to Vienna, accompanied by Leopold ; and having paid their respects to the Emperor, they proceeded to Mittewald, and from thence to Treviso ; thus spending the time allotted for his banishment ; at the conclusion of which, the Princess, whose heart was superior to disguise, gave him her hand, with a frankness that assured him of future happiness ; and so truly did he experience it, that it became a friendly rivalry, which of the four, Adeline, Zulima, Matilda, or Alphonsine, enjoyed the greatest share of felicity ; they each, however, found themselves beloved, not only by their husbands, but by their friends, their servants, and their subjects, fully exemplifying that
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grand truth, that a virtuous conduct will for ever ensure a lasting respect.

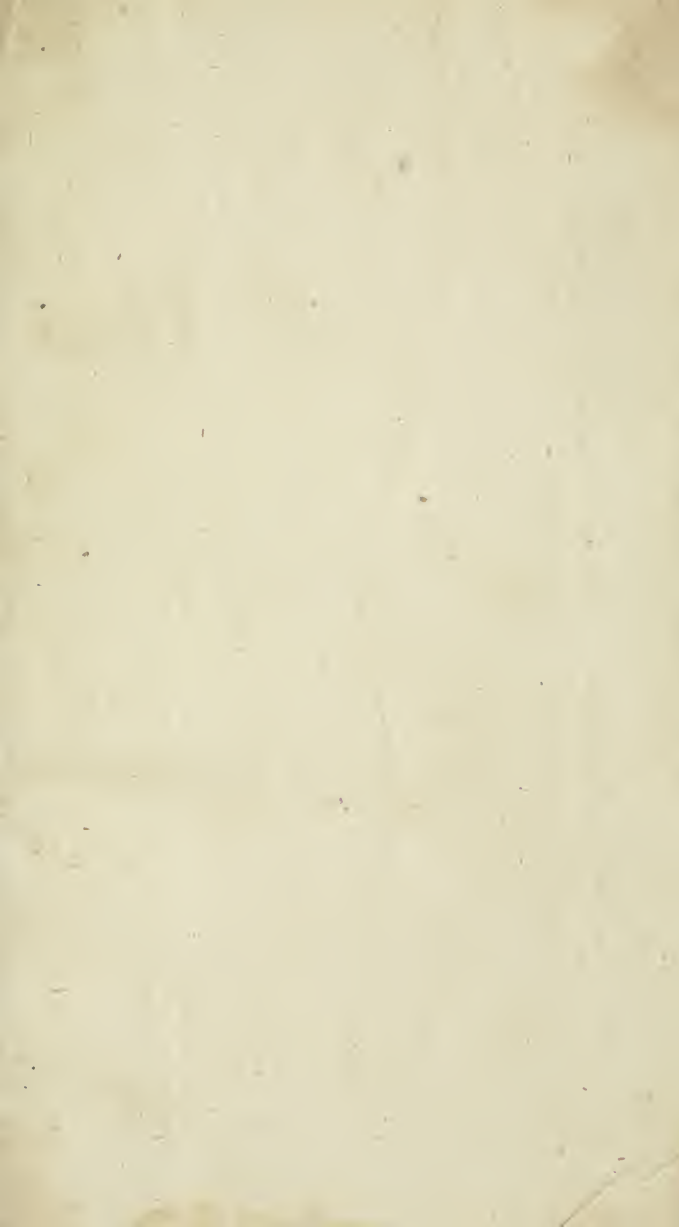
While these happy couples enjoyed the highest felicity permitted to human nature, the venerable Count Von Werdenberg contemplated them with an eye of parental affection; he made no distinction between them, but considered them equally as his own child. Frequently, however, would a sigh, at the recollection of his past happiness, escape him; but the company of his friends, Leopold, Ardolph, and De Rosenberg, served to banish retrospection, and he lived many years encircled by a numerous family, whose early virtues promised to give additional lustre to the houses of Werdenberg, De Mountfort, and Clagenfurth.

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